MINOR ORDERS

L. BACUEZ

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MINOR ORDERS.

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BY

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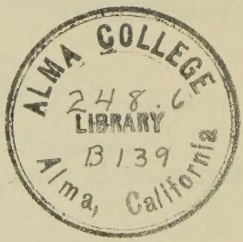

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PREFACE.

The purpose of seminaries being to prepare ecclesiastics for ordinations, it would seem that the most common topics of a seminarian's meditations should be such interesting, and to him, vitally important subjects as the nature of the Orders he is to receive, the powers which they confer, the virtues which they require, the duties which they impose, the graces to which they entitle their recipient and the fruits which they ought to produce. What is more suited to touch his heart, to make him feel the necessity of perfection, to give him a taste for piety and a love for prayer! As a matter of fact, however, ordinands seldom meditate on these topics. The reason is that most of them, in their mental prayer, confine themselves to the subjects proposed to the community; subjects which must be adapted to the general needs of all and not to the special requirements of the smaller number who are preparing for the reception of some particular order.

It was to meet these special requirements that this book was written. On the days when the

meditation is made in silence, there is nothing to prevent a seminarian from choosing the subject which best suits his state and disposition; and with our indications, he will find it easy to meditate on his coming ordination and what it means for him.

This little book is a sequel to one we have published on Tonsure. God grant that those who make use of it may conceive a great respect for Minor Orders and prepare for them as they should! The dispositions with which they approach ordination will be the measure of the graces they receive, and on this measure depends, in a great part, the fruit which their ministry will produce. To have a rich harvest the first thing necessary is to sow well: *Qui parce seminat parce et metet; et qui seminat in benedictionibus de benedictionibus et metet.*[1]

We shall see, on the last day, what injury an ordinand does to himself and what detriment he causes to souls by losing, through his own fault, a part of the graces destined to sanctify his priesthood and render fruitful the fields of the Heavenly Father: *Modica seminis detractio non est modicum messis detrimentum.*[2]

[1] II Cor., ix, 6. [2] St. Bern.

PART I.
INSTRUCTIONS ON MINOR ORDERS.

CHAPTER I.

ORDERS IN GENERAL AND MINOR ORDERS IN PARTICULAR.

I.

WHAT POWERS DID THE SON OF GOD GIVE TO HIS MINISTERS?

He gave them two kinds of powers, powers of orders and powers of jurisdiction.

Both are supernatural and for two reasons: First because of their source, since they owe their origin to a positive institution, to a free and visible act of our Savior; and, secondly, because of their end, which is the sanctification of souls and the possession of God in Heaven.

But their objects are distinct. The power of jurisdiction is the spiritual authority exercised over the mystical body of the Savior, that is to say,

over His members taken collectively, as constituting Christian society. This authority has, in the Church, a rôle analogous to that of the civil authority in the State. It is this that gives to superiors their various functions; the right to teach, to minister, to command and to punish. It is owing to this power that they regulate the relations of the faithful to one another, that they provide for divine worship and the interests of souls. The power of orders has an object, not more comprehensive, but more lofty. It is exercised over Jesus Christ Himself, since its subject is His Divine Body in its sacramental state and what is connected with it. It reaches the faithful only indirectly, as individuals and in their relations to the Eucharist. All its acts have reference to Our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar, to the consecration of His Sacred Body, to its offering, to its worthy reception or to the particular worship which should be rendered to it.

These two powers of orders and of jurisdiction are united in the Bishop. He possesses them in their plenitude and uses them freely, albeit with due submission to the supremacy of the Sovereign Pontiff. When he ordains a minister or confers on him

a charge in his diocese, he but communicates to him a part of the powers which belong to himself as successor of the Apostles and representative of Jesus Christ.[1]

II.

IN WHAT MANNER CAN THE BISHOP COMMUNICATE HIS POWERS IN ORDINATION?

The power of orders is exercised in several ways and includes various functions: ordination, the Holy Sacrifice, the distribution of the Body and Blood of the Savior, the offering of the matter destined for consecration, the preparation of the altar, of the assistants and of the Church for the celebration of the holy mysteries. Consequently this power is divisible, each of these functions supposing in him who fulfils them regularly and officially a right, a spiritual power distinct from all the others.

It entered into the plan of divine wisdom that all these powers should be conferred separately, in a graded manner, according to a proper progression.

[1] Sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei. I Cor., IV, 1.

Conformably to the designs of Our Lord, the Church has ordained that there should be for each of them a particular class of ministers,—that some should be established to watch over the holy place, others to instruct the faithful, others to defend them against the devil and withdraw them from his power, still others to prepare the sanctuary and to decorate the altar, etc. Moreover it has been determined that one may arrive at the higher powers only progressively, mounting degree by degree, that each new order be super-added to the preceding orders, and that the lower be dependent on the higher.[1] Hence the holy hierarchy of sacred ministers, the supernatural origin and divine character of which was defined by the Council of Trent.[2]

Thus, the pontificate or the plenitude of priestly power which resides in the Bishop, is distributed by ordination into seven distinct orders, the one subor-

[1] Si quis dixerit non esse in Ecclesia ordines et majores et minores, per quos velut per gradus quosdam in sacerdotium tendatur, anathema sit. Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii, can. 2. Ordinis sacramentum est thronus ille eburneus mystici Salomonis, cujus reclinatorium aureum, ad quem ascenditur sex gradibus purpureis, media caritate constratis. Pet. Bles.

[2] Si quis dixerit non esse hierarchiam divina ordinatione institutam, anathema sit. Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii, can. 6.

dinate to the other: the priesthood, which gives the power to offer and consecrate the Divine Host; the diaconate, charged with its distribution; the subdiaconate, to which belongs the duty of preparing the matter of the sacrifice and the sacred vessels; the order of acolyte, to which belongs the care of the altar and the lights; the order of exorcist, which keeps out the unworthy and frees those possessed; the order of lector, which proclaims the word of God and assists the hearers to penetrate into its spirit; the order of ostiary, which guards the property of the House of God and assembles the faithful. These seven powers successively conferred, beginning with the last, are superimposed one upon the other without ever disappearing or coming in conflict, so that in the priesthood, the highest of them all, they are all found. The priest unites them all in his person and has to exercise them all his life in the various offices of his ministry. They are as the seven columns of the living temple which the Incarnate Wisdom has raised up to the Divine Majesty.[1] Thus is justified the name of Orders which they

[1] Sapentia ædificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem, immolavit victimas suas, miscuit vinum et proposuit mensam suam. PROV., IX, 1.

receive and that of ordination given by the Church to the religious act which introduces her ministers into her hierarchy, which assigns to them their rank and their functions.[1]

III.

WHY DID OUR LORD WISH TO ESTABLISH AMONG HIS MINISTERS THIS VARIETY AND PROGRESSION OF POWERS?

We cannot give all His reasons, but we can show the advantages which result from this institution to the honor of the priesthood, the dignity of worship, and the perfection of the clergy.

1. A statue, however perfect, would never be appreciated by most people, unless it were placed on a suitable pedestal. Likewise the pontificate, which is the perfection of the priesthood, would not inspire the faithful with all the esteem it merits, if it had not beneath it, to give it due prominence, these different classes of subordinate ministers, classes inferior one to another, but the least of which is superior to the entire order of laymen.

[1] Quæ autem sunt, a Deo ordinatæ sunt. ROM., XIII, 1.

2. The ceremonies of divine worship would be less imposing, if there were not variety in rank and function among the ministers of the sanctuary. They would represent in a far less perfect manner the religion of the celestial hierarchies and the worship unceasingly paid to God by the different orders of creation.[1]

3. Finally would there not be a two-fold danger in suddenly elevating a subject to the highest of ecclesiastical honors and imposing on him the most weighty of charges? Indeed even when we are best prepared for a change of position, we are still liable to suffer spiritual loss, proportionate to the loftiness of the position which we acquire. It is true that grace can work sudden transformations without any sustained coöperation on our part. But it is not the way of divine grace suddenly to elevate a soul to the height of perfection. God wishes that our spiritual edifice should be built up little by little, that the interior man should grow, like the exterior man, slowly and insensibly, and that our virtue should be at once the result of our efforts and the fruit of His divine

[1] Hac mira varietate Ecclesia sancta circumdatur, ornatur et regitur. PONT. ROM., *De presb.* Cf. CONC. TRID., Sess. XXIII. *De reform.* c. 17.

mercy.[1] The priest ought not then, as a pious writer says, to be like a statue of bronze, which is melted in a cast and which comes from the mould with the form which it will keep; but rather as a statue of marble, which is drawn laboriously from the block, stroke by stroke, and which must be carved and polished leisurely.[2]

IV.

WHY ARE THERE SEVEN ORDERS AND WHENCE COMES THIS COMMON NAME OF ORDERS?

1. That there are seven Orders is a fact attested by the tradition and practice of the Church, not an essential and evident truth which carries in itself its own demonstration.[3] Our Lord deemed best that it should be so: that reason is enough. Nevertheless, for those who think that the Divine Wisdom does nothing without a motive worthy of Itself,

[1] Septem diebus consecrabis manus eorum. EXOD., XXIX, 35. Ita de gradu in gradum ascendant ut in eis cum ætate vitæ meritum et doctrina major accrescat. CONC. TRID., Sess. XXIII, *De ref.*, c. 11. Bulla *Auctorem fidei*, prop. 55.

[2] Scalpri salubris ictibus, et tunsione plurima,
Fabri pollita malleo. *Hymn. Dedic.*

[3] CONC. TRID,. Sess. XXIII, cap. 2, can. 2.

and who take pleasure in admiring the harmony and agreement which reign in all Its works, we would remark that the seven classes of ministers, joined to the Bishop who is placed at their head, and to the simple clerics, who are, as it were, the novices in the ecclesiastical state, form in all nine different choirs consecrated to the worship of God, and that in this point, as in many others, the Church on earth has the advantage of resembling that of heaven and of representing it in the eyes of the faithful.[1]

2. That these seven orders form a unity, a species, and that they are designated by the same term, is a natural consequence of the analogy that exists between them and the relations which unite them. We should not forget that the ministers who belong to them form only one body;[2] that all the Orders tend to one end;[3] that they are all united in and

[1] Progressiones episcoporum, presbyterorum, diacon rum sunt, ut arbitror, imitationes gloriæ angelicæ illus œconomiæ et dispensationis. Clem. Alex., *Strom*, vi.

[2] Sicut corpus unum est et membra habet multa, omnia autem membra corporis, cum sint multa, unum tamen corpus sunt, ita et Christus. Si totum corpus oculus, ubi auditus? Si totum auditus, ubi odoratus? I Cor., xii, 12.

[3] Eucharistia est finis omnium sacramentorum. S. Th. p. 3, q. 65, a. 3, ad 2; q. 73, a. 3; q. 72, a. 6. Ordines habent quod sint sacramenta ex relatione ad maximum sacramentum, Eucharistiam scilicet, *Suppl.* q. 37, a. 2, ad 1.

completed by the priesthood;[1] finally, that it is to their agreement as to the distinction between them that the harmony which reigns in the clergy and in the whole Church is due.

V.

DO ALL ORDINATIONS CAUSE THE RECIPIENTS TO SHARE IN THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS?

It is of faith that there is a sacrament of Orders, that this sacrament imprints an indelible character and that the ministers of the Church participate in it, at least by the reception of the Priesthood. The definitions of the Council of Trent leave us no doubt on this point. Moreover it is agreed that the essentials of a sacrament are found in the rite employed from the earliest ages in the conferring of Deaconship. But the Church has defined nothing as regarding the lower Orders and Theologians are far from agreeing on the question. We may say, never-

[1] Tota plenitudo hujus sacramenti est in uno ordine, scilicet sacerdotio; sed in aliis est quædam participatio ordinis, et ideo omnes ordines sunt unum sacramentum. *In* IV *Sent.*, dist, 24, q. 2, a. 1.

theless, that the greater number and the most famous among the ancient doctors, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, etc., place them on the same plane as the diaconate and the priesthood, and speak of them as a sacrament.[1]

This is not the place to discuss their reasons. We shall say only that there is nothing in this opinion which does not agree with the doctrine and practice of the Church. If we read through the Canons of the Council of Trent, we shall notice that, after having defined that there are different Orders, Major and Minor, through which it is necessary to pass to reach the priesthood, it immediately adds, as a dogma of faith, without exception or distinction, that Holy Orders is a sacrament properly so-called and that its institution dates back to our Lord.[2]

[1] Billuart, *De Ordine*, Diss. I, a. 3. Of the four Minor Orders the Greeks have only that of Lectorate.

[2] Si quis dixerit ordinem, sive sacram ordinationem non esse verum sacramentum a Christo institutum, anathema sit. Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii, can 3. Si quis dixerit præter sacerdotium non esse alios ordines majores et minores, per quos velut per gradus quosdam ad sacerdotium tendatur, anathema sit. Can. 1 et 2. (All of the orders could have been instituted *quoad substantiam*, in the diaconate and the priesthood, and been divided and separated by the Church. Thus among the Greeks they are still undivided in the diaconate.)

And if we consult the practice of the Church we shall see that her principle has always been that all these ordinations belong, by right, to the Bishops, who are the only ordinary ministers of them, that each one has, as its essential rite, a matter and form analogous to that of the priesthood and to those of the other sacraments; that precious graces are attached to their reception and, finally, that it is never permitted to repeat any one of them, except there be doubt as to its validity.

It is true that we find no mention made of Minor Orders or of the sub-diaconate, either in the New Testament or in the most ancient Fathers. At first sight, this fact is surprising; but it does not prove that they could not be part of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The explanation of St. Thomas is that in the early years of Christianity, the Church, having only a small number of adherents and very moderate resources, was obliged to limit, as much as possible, the number of her ministers; and for this reason, she found it well to have the Deacons (*διαχονους*, ministros) exercise all the functions of orders not reserved to the priests, and to confer on them at one time all of the powers of these orders. Instead, then, of giving the lower Orders separately

and to different persons, she used the liberty which her Founder had left to confer them simultaneously, be it by one summary ordination or by distinct ordinations conferred without intervals. But this state of things scarcely lasted longer than one century. The Church, as soon as she was well established and enjoyed some degree of liberty, felt the need of increasing her clergy and of maintaining distinct orders among clerics. She hastened, then, to multiply her ministers, while diversifying their functions. Finally, she decided to confer the subdiaconate and Minor orders only in distinct and graded ordinations.[1] Hence we find many of these orders mentioned in the ecclesiastical documents of the second century. In the third we find them all well established and universally known.[2]

[1] In primitiva Ecclesia, propter paucitatem ministrorum omnia inferiora ministeria diaconis committebantur, ut patet per Dionysium (*Eccles. Hierarch,* III). Nihilominus erant omnes prædictæ potestates, sed implicite in una Diaconi potestate; sed postea ampliatus est cultus divinus, et Ecclesia, quod implicite habebat in uno ordine, explicite tradidit in diversis. Et secundum hoc dicit Magister quod Ecclesia alios ordines instituit. S. THOM., *Supplem.*, q. 37, a. 2. Cf. *In* IV *Sent.* dist, 24, q. 1, a. 1.

[2] S. CORN., *Epist. ad Fab. Antioch.*, apud Euseb. *H. E.*, IV, 43 (252), et CONC. CARTHAG. IV (398), in quo exponitur ritus ordinationum.

This explanation seems plausible to us. Since Our Lord so ardently wished that His ministers should be holy and all their duties well performed, is it not to be presumed that He would do for the ecclesiastical state what He has done for the state of matrimony, that is to say, establish in His Church a particular source of graces whence all those who would wish to consecrate themselves to His ministry might draw in abundance the help necessary to fulfil their duties and worthily exercise their functions?

However this may be, whether or not the lower Orders up to the Diaconate imprint the sacramental character, whether or not they are of divine institution, the grace of the ecclesiastical ministry certainly depends on the manner in which they are received;[1] and it seems beyond doubt that an ordinand who would present himself unworthily, in the state of mortal sin, would commit a grave fault and be guilty of sacrilege.[2]

[1] Ordinis effectus est augmentum gratiæ, ut quis sit idoneus minister. Eug., iv, *Decret. ad Armen.*

[2] Cum in quolibet ordine aliquis constituatur dux aliis in rebus divinis, in quolibet quasi præsumptuosus mortaliter peccat, qui cum conscientia peccati mortalis ad ordines accedit. S. Thom, *In* iv *Sent.* dist, 24, q. 1, a. 3. Quare sanctam illam consuetudinem in Ecclesia servari

VI.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ANYONE SHOULD RECEIVE AN ORDER, MAJOR OR MINOR, WITHOUT HAVING RECEIVED THE PREVIOUS ORDINATIONS?

1. If there be question of the episcopal consecration and the subject has not received the order of Priesthood, it is generally agreed that the ordination would be null and of no effect, the episcopal character being only an extension of that of the priesthood, and the episcopacy only completing and perfecting the priestly dignity.

2. Any other ordination thus received, *per saltum*, would be valid but illicit; and as it is forbidden under pain of suspension by ecclesiastical law,[1] one ordained in this manner must abstain from all the functions of the Order until he receive, together with the removal of his suspension, the lower Orders through which he should have passed.

animadvertimus, ut qui sacris initiandi sunt prius pœnitentiæ sacramento conscientiam purgare diligenter studeant. CATECH. CONC. TRID., p. 2, c. 7.

[1] CONC. TRID., Sess. XXIII, *De reform*, cap. 14; et can. *Sollicitudo*, dist. 52; et can *S. officia*, dist, 59.

3. If the Order received *per saltum* were the priesthood, the person would, in virtue of his Ordination, have all the lower orders, since they are only parts or divisions of the Order of priesthood. But it would not be the same if the Order received were the diaconate, sub-diaconate, or one of the Minor Orders. The reason of this is that each of the lower Orders, up to priesthood, has an entirely distinct object, and since the lower does not belong to the higher, as a part to the whole, the power and grace which has already been received for the exercise of one does not imply the power and grace necessary to exercise the others.

Consequently, when St. Thomas says that the ordination of the first Deacons conferred on them, at one and the same time, all the Orders below priesthood, he does not mean to say that such is the natural effect of the ordination to the diaconate; but he means that this was done in virtue of a particular command of Our Lord and of an extraordinary power confided to the Apostles during the first years of the Church; or it may be supposed that the first six ordinations, though not separated from one another by intervals of time, were given successively,

according to their particular rites or, again, that God gave to the Church exceptional powers in this regard.[1]

VII.

DO WE FIND IN THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS, AS IN THAT OF MATRIMONY AND IN ALL THE OTHERS, SOME SYMBOL OR MYSTERIOUS SIGNIFICATION?

The rites or sacred signs by which Holy Orders is conferred represent to the soul things mysterious and sublime, namely:

1. The supernatural powers that are conferred on the ordinands in relation to Our Lord and His members, and the graces which should accompany these powers that they may be used in a holy manner.

2. The divine pontificate with which the Eternal Father invested His Son, when at the moment of the Incarnation, He accepted Him and designated Him as the Supreme Sacrificer, as the Sole Priest and Sole Victim of religion for all eternity.[2]

[1] Cf. p. 11, 12.

[2] Ingrediens mundum dicit: Holocautomata pro peccato non tibi placuerunt; tunc dixi: Ecce venio, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam; in qua voluntate sanctificati sumus. HEB., x, 5, etc.

3. The glorious priesthood which, according to St. John, the elect exercise with their Divine Master in heaven, where they are, with Him and through Him, so many priests of the divine majesty, who unceasingly offer to the Father of Mercy the Lamb without spot whose Blood was shed for the salvation of man.[1]

VIII.

WHAT EFFECTS DOES THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS PRODUCE?

The sacrament of Holy Orders produces in those who receive it worthily three principal effects;

1. It increases sanctifying grace; and this increase is considerable, for it is such as befits the ecclesiastical state, which is the highest in the Church. An ordinary measure of grace would not suffice to give to the Savior, friends worthy of Him and to sanctify as they should be sanctified the ministers charged with the sanctification of the rest of the Church.[2]

[1] Fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum et sacerdotes. APOC., v, 10. Erunt sacerdotes Dei et Christi et regnabunt mille annis. *Ibid.* xx, 6.

[2] Effectus ordinis est augmentum gratiæ ut quis sit idoneus minister. *Decret. ad Armen.*

2. It brings down the Holy Ghost upon them to assist them in their ministry and put them in a condition to acquit themselves worthily of all their duties. By the aid of this gift, by the supernatural graces and help of all kinds of which it is the pledge, they can hope to live as true ministers of God, to be, even till death, faithful dispensers of the sacred mysteries, worthy mediators between God and man, useful representatives of the Savior and of the Church, to offer to the Divine Majesty the worship of reverence, thanksgiving and expiation which is due to Him, to obtain for the faithful the blessings, the lights, the assistance which they need in order to live in the friendship of the Savior and participate in His virtues.[1] The lives of holy priests show us in a sensible manner the effects of the sacrament of Holy Orders and make us appreciate its value.[2]

[1] Propterea officium sacerdotis est esse mediatorem inter Deum et populum, in quantum scilicet divina populo tradit, et iterum in quantum preces populi Deo offert. S. Thom., p, 3. q. 2. a. 1.

[2] Dicendum quod Dei perfecta sunt opera et ideo cuicumque datur potentia aliqua divinitus, dantur ea per quæ executio illius potentiæ potest congrue fieri. Et hoc patet etiam in naturalibus; et ita in sacramento ordinis per quod homo ordinatur ad aliorum sacramentorum dispensationem. S. Thom., *In* iv dist, 24, q. 1, a. 1.

3. It imprints on their soul a supernatural and indelible character, which distinguishes them from the simple faithful, places them in a higher order, unites them to Jesus Christ, as pontiff and head of His mystical body, makes them participate in His priesthood and gives to them the power necessary to exercise these august functions with authority.

This character is superior to that of Confirmation and that of Baptism. The character of Baptism puts us in a state in which we can receive the sacraments and live in a holy manner, in accordance with the maxims of faith: that of Holy Orders enables us to administer the sacraments, to preach the faith, to make other Christians and other ministers of God. The character of Confirmation gives us the grace to live as perfect Christians and to fight as generous soldiers of Jesus Christ; that of Holy Orders to propagate Christian life, give example to the more perfect, and lead them as a worthy general of the army of the Lord.

One day a fallen priest presented himself to St. Philip Neri dressed in civilian's garb; "My son," said the saint, after having looked at him a moment: "it is in vain that you disguise yourself; I see shin-

ing upon your face the character of your priesthood."[1]

IX.

DOES THE EFFECT OF THE ORDINATION DEPEND ON THE DISPOSITIONS OF THE MINISTER OR ON THOSE OF THE SUBJECT?

In this regard, ordination has always been compared to the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

1. The sanctity of the minister is not an indifferent thing. In virtue of his prayers and the edification of his example, he can be very useful to the ordinands as well as to the faithful. But the efficacy of the sacrament does not depend on it. For the Order to be conferred with a grace which should accrue to the subject, it is sufficient that the rite used in the Church should be observed exactly.[2]

[1] *Life of S. Phil. Neri.* In ordine asumitur signaculum in anima ordinati indelebile in perpetuum; et per illud cognoscetur ille, tam in die judicii quam in inferno, quam in cœlo, quod fuit in tali ordine ad sui gloriam vel confusionem perpetuam. Fr. Humb. *Biblioth. Pat.*, XXII, p. 528.

[2] Si enim baptismus per hæreticum datus ritus habendus est, nihil omnino causæ est cur non et consecratio. PET. DAM., *Opusc.* VI, c. 4.

2. On the part of the ordinand, it is necessary that he be in the friendship of God, not indeed that he may receive the character and powers of the Order,[1] but that he may oppose no obstacle to grace. Besides, the better he is disposed, the more fully will the Holy Ghost be communicated to him: *Qui habet dabitur ei.*[2] According to all Theologians and Holy Doctors it is the same for the grace of Orders as for the miraculous oil which the prophet Eliseus blessed.[3] It is of itself inexhaustible. As the oil did not cease to flow until it had filled all the vessels of the widow of Sunam, so also the grace of the sacraments has no other limit save the dispositions of the capacity which it finds in those who receive it.

Let the ordinand then neglect nothing that he may be well disposed. Let him stir up his faith in the grandeur and holiness of the priesthood. Let him humble himself on account of his own unworthiness. Let him make to God, in all sincerity, the promises to which he feels the need of being faithful.

[1] Dei manus tangit caput ordinati, dummodo quemadmodum oportet ordinetur. S. Chrys., *In Act. Apost.*, Hom. xiv, 3.

[2] Matth., xiii, 12.

[3] IV Kings, iv, 1–8.

Finally, let him take every care and use every effort to profit by the retreat, remembering that he will receive the ordination only once and that the graces that will be given to him then must last even to the end of his life.[1]

X.

WHY ARE THE FIRST FOUR ORDERS CALLED MINOR OR LESSER?

1. If they are thus qualified it is not in consideration of their functions in themselves, nor by comparison with the lay state. From this point of view they could not be too highly honored. The Church shows well the esteem in which she holds them, not only by the manner in which she speaks of them in the Councils of Trent,[2] Florence and the Fourth of Carthage, but by the care which she takes in calling to them only those ecclesiastics who have persevered in the clerical state and whose conduct after receiving tonsure has justified the estimation which she had formed of their capacity and their virtue.

[1] Sacramentum illud non licet iterare. S. Aug., *Cont. Epist. Parmen.*, II, 28.
[2] Sess. XXIII, *De reform*, c. 11.

2. They are given this name of *lesser* only in comparison to Sacred Orders, which, conferring still higher powers, demand greater sanctity and impose greater obligations.[1] The latter are called higher without any intention of lowering the former.[2] It is thus that the angelic choir is called the least in the celestial hierachy. On earth, as in Heaven, the idea of order or of hierarchy implies subordination. But that which is lesser in the Church is far superior, I do not say, to what is highest in the world,[3] but to what was most excellent or most sublime in the religion of the chosen people of old, and we may apply here the words of the Divine Master: *Amen dico vobis: non surrexit major Joanne Baptista: qui autem minor est in regno cœlorum major est illo.*[4]

[1] Minores remote tantum circa Eucharistiam versantur. *Catech. Trid.*

[2] Alia claritas solis, alia claritas stellarum. Stella enim differt a stella in claritate, ait Apostolus. Ecclesia autem habet et stellas in gradibus suis. ARNOB., jun. *In Psalt.*

[3] Per ordines datur potestas immiscendi se divinis, quod non habent reges per potentiam, nec sapientes per sapientiam, nec divites per divitias; imo et rex Ozias, et sapiens et dives, qui hoc ausus attentare, percussus est lepra a Deo. S. GREG. Naz.

[4] MATT., XI, 11.

XI.

IS IT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO RECEIVE THESE FIRST ORDERS WELL?

Nothing could be more unfortunate nor of more evil augury than to enter the way leading to Holy Orders by a profanation.[1] But if one is desirous of becoming a holy priest, he should not confine himself to avoiding this misfortune: he should strive to receive, in its plenitude, the grace of the first ordinations and should neglect nothing in order to turn it to good account.

It is the best means to prepare oneself for the priesthood. "*He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater,*" says Our Lord, "*and to everyone that hath more shall be given and he shall abound.*"[2]

It likewise has a bearing on the way one will acquit himself of the duties of the holy ministry. A priest has not only to administer the sacraments to the faithful and fulfil the duties proper to the priesthood;

[1] Bened. xiv, *De synod. diœces*, viii, 12.

[2] Luc. xvi, 10; xix, 26. Qui bene ministraverint in minoribus ordinibus gradum bonum sibi acquirent ut fiant sacerdotes. Hug. Card. *In I Tim.* iv.

he also has often to exercise the other duties of the ecclesiastical state, the office of deacon, sub-deacon, acolyte and of the other Orders, and he is bound to fulfill these duties with more perfection than those who are lower than he in the hierarchy. Moreover, who cannot see that the exact accomplishment of the duties attached to the first Orders is the best possible initiation to the priestly life; that a faithful and pious Ostiary cannot help but respect and make others respect the holy mysteries, that a studious and fervent Lector gives promise of becoming a good preacher; that an Exorcist humble and zealous against sin will become a useful confessor, finally, that an exemplary Acolyte will honor the holy altar and inspire love for the Divine Sacrifice?[1]

One can then understand the importance that good ecclesiastics attach to these ordinations and the fervor with which they prepare themselves for them. "I am about to enter on a retreat of ten days," wrote a pious ecclesiastic of Dijon, Bénigne

[1] Qui pie et fideliter in ministeriis anteactis se gesserunt, ad presbyteratus ordinem assumantur. Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii. *De reform.* 14. Ita de gradu in gradum ascendant ut in eis cum ætate vitæ meritum et doctrina major accrescat. *Ibid.* 11.

Joly, in 1664, to his sisters, Dominican nuns of a convent of Beaune.[1] "I intend to prepare myself to receive Minor Orders and I realize how much I need the graces of Heaven for that. Do you join me, I pray you, that I may obtain the blessing of God, the spirit of the ecclesiastical state and particularly that which Our Lord wishes to see in those whom he honors with these Holy Orders. I am convinced, my dear sisters, that the misfortune of a great number of priests comes from the fact that they have not received in ordination the spirit of their state; and I so much fear being deprived of it, that I would prefer rather to expose myself to every evil than not to do my best to draw it down upon me. Recommend me then to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. May Our Lord put in my

[1] Fervent ecclesiastics have always been careful thus to recommend their ordinations to the prayers of pious persons: "Vos, amici mei, vos obsecro, per misericordiam Christi, succurrite mihi precibus, adjuvate me votis; ne sub mole importabilis sarcinæ succumbat infirmitas vacillantis, certissime sciens quantum etiam immeritis fides vel oratio proficiat aliena." Petr. Bless *Epist.* cxxxix. Prævenite consecrationem meam vestris orationibus et mandate hoc monachis ac monialibus per Normanniam et amicis nostris in Francia. Lanfranc, *Epist. ad S. Anselm.*, i, 32.

soul the virtues of humility, religion, modesty, zeal for his glory, esteem for His Holy Scripture, purity of intention, detachment from the things of the world and every other disposition whatsoever that is necessary to the honor of being admitted into His House. May I approach the Altar of the Lord as worthily as my misery permits!"

XII.

HOW CAN ONE KNOW THAT HE IS SUFFICIENTLY PREPARED TO RECEIVE MINOR ORDERS?

An ecclesiastic who, for a considerable time, has taken care to avoid sin and to lead a pious life, who feels full of ardor for the sacred functions and of zeal for the ecclesiastical virtues, who has no other desire than to serve God and the Church, and who works with constancy and success to render himself capable of them, is assuredly one of those who can be ordained to good advantage.[1]

Nevertheless, if he wishes to respond perfectly to grace and to follow the example of holy priests,

[1] Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii, 11.

he will not omit making a good retreat before his ordination;[1] and during the days that he consecrates to it, he will apply himself to three things: (1) To purify his conscience and his heart by contrition, detachment and humility. (2) To understand the excellence of Holy Orders and the holiness of the priesthood by serious reading and pious meditation.[2] (3) To implore the assistance of Heaven, following the example of the Apostles gathered in the Cenacle, and to ask, as they did, with great confidence, the graces necessary to remain faithful to his vocation. It is in these three things that his proximate preparation should consist.[3]

XIII.

HOW OUGHT AN ORDINAND TO PURIFY HIMSELF WHEN PREPARING FOR ORDINATION?

1. He ought to purify his conscience, that is to say, know all his faults and detest them from the depth

[1] Solitudo est auditorium Spiritus sancti. *Opera* S. BERN., Guerri *De adv.* c. *Dom.*, Serm., IV, 1.

[2] Dignitas vestri prius noscatur a vobis, deinde servetur. S. AMB. *De dign. sacerd.*

[3] Spiritum bonum dabit petentibus se. LUKE, XI, 13.

of his heart, conceive a great horror for the least sins, destroy and efface in himself all that could become the occasion of sin or suggest sin to his mind. Nothing is more essential than to live in innocence and to establish oneself in the sanctity which the sanctuary demands.[1]

2. He ought to purify his intentions, by renouncing all affection for the honors, pleasures and riches of the world that might yet remain in him. Nothing is more necessary, if he would draw down on himself the favors of the Savior and receive abundant graces.[2]

3. He ought to purify his heart by self-detachment humbling himself on account of his misery and acknowledging himself unworthy of the sacred character of Holy Orders. To recognize his own unworthiness, when he has offended God and profaned the grace of Baptism, he has but to open his eyes to the fact; but to be penetrated with that sense of sin, it is indispensable that he suppress all self-love and

[1] Lotos aqua indues sanctis vestibus ut ministrent mihi. EXOD., XL, 12. Considerate diligenter ordinem dictorum. Prius lavat, postea induit. Non enim potes indui, nisi ante lotus fueris. Lavamini ergo et mundi estote. ORIGEN., *Hom.* VI *in Levit.*

[2] Tene breve et consummatum verbum: dimitte omnia et invenies omnia. *Imit.*, III, 32.

pride which are the first and last inspirations of the old Adam.[1]

XIV.

CAN SEVERAL ORDERS BE RECEIVED ON THE SAME DAY OR IN A SHORT SPACE OF TIME?

Bishops are free to bring the ordinations close together when the good of the Church demands it. Nevertheless, except by a very particular dispensation, they cannot confer two Sacred Orders on the same day. The violation of this rule would make one incur the most severe penalties. Tonsure and the four Minor Orders may be conferred on the same day; but Minor Orders and the sub-diaconate are almost always conferred at different times. The Congregation of the Council censures the giving of Minor Orders and sub-diaconate at once. Today the four Minor Orders are frequently given at one single ordination. The reasons which formerly caused them to be conferred in separate ordinations no longer exist. But all the stronger reason arises

[1] Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam. I PET, v, 5. Ad quem respiciam, nisi ad pauperculum et contritum spiritu et trementem sermones meos? Is., LXVI, 2

for separating the sub-diaconate from the Minor Orders and putting between the Sacred Orders the intervals demanded by the Council of Trent.[1]

The time which one passes in the clergy before priesthood is as a novitiate during which he tries his strength, exercises his virtues and endeavors to acquire the spirit and light that the ecclesiastical state demands.[2] If he wishes that this novitiate produce fruits it is necessary that it be of sufficiently long duration.[3] Consider that the faithful would not have the same esteem for the ecclesiastical career, if

[1] Minores ordines per ordinum interstitia, nisi aliud episcopo expedire magis videatur, conferantur. Hi post annum a susceptione postremi gradus minorum ordinum ad sacros ordines promoveantur, nisi necessitas aut Ecclesiæ utilitas, judicio Episcopi, aliud exposcat. Promoti ad sacrum subdiaconatus ordinem, si per annum saltem in eo non sunt versati, ad altiorem gradum ascendere non permittantur. In diaconatu ad minus integrum annum ministraverint, nisi aliud Episcopo videatur. Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii. *De ref.* 11–14.

[2] Necesse est ut per distinctos ordines ecclesiasticis exerceatur officiis, ut videat quod imitetur, discat quod doceat, informetur quod tenat, ut postea non debeat errare qui eligitur viam errantibus demonstrare. S. Greg. M., *Epist.* ix, cvi.

[3] Plumesce in nido, antequam voles in altum, ut solidatis alarum pennis, possis alas in activæ vitæ moderamine deponere, et easdem in altitudinem contemplationis elevare. Yvo Carn., *Epist.* xxxvii.

they should see that one could prepare for it rapidly and receive, in a moment, nearly all the Orders.

XV.

CAN MINOR ORDERS BE CONFERRED ON ANY DAY AND AT ANY HOUR?

Besides the days designated for general ordinations, Minor Orders may be conferred on any Sunday or holy-day of obligation. Many others add the Wednesdays and Fridays of Ember days, in virtue[1] of an ancient custom which appears not to have been suppressed.

It is fitting to give these Orders only at Mass; and such is the universal custom. However we find no law which prescribes it.

[1] Dari possunt extra Missarum solemnia diebus Dominicis et Festivis duplicibus, sed in mane tantum. *Pontif.*

CHAPTER II.

THE ORDER OF OSTIARY.

XVI.

WHAT IS THE FIRST MINOR ORDER AND HOW IS IT CONFERRED?

1. The first Minor Order is the Ostiariate or the Order of Ostiary.[1] The duty of this order is to take care of the House of God, to summon the faithful at the hours for the holy offices and to see that modesty, silence and religion are preserved there, especially during the Divine Sacrifice; to keep away from the offices those who are unworthy of assisting at them, such as infidels, excommunicated persons and those who give scandal; finally, to guard with care the treasures of the Church both spiritual and temporal, that is to say, the Holy Eucharist, the Sacred Scriptures, the vestments, sacred vessels and the alms

[1] Ostiarius fores ecclesiæ custodiat. Conc. Mediol. I. Joiada constituit janitores in portis domus Domini, ut non ingrederetur eam immundus in omni re. II. Paral., xxiii, 19.

destined for the poor. To acquit himself of these functions as he ought, the recipient of Minor Orders should receive from the Holy Ghost a very particular power and grace.

2. After having warned the ordinand of the duties that this office imposes on him the Bishop makes him touch the keys of the Church, while he says to him: "*So act as about to render an account of those things which are kept under these keys.*" The action of the prelate is the matter of the Ordination, his words are the form.

XVII.

HAS THIS ORDER, LIKE ALL THE SACRAMENTS, A MYSTIC SIGNIFICATION?

Not only does the rite of the ordination express in a sensible manner the power and grace which it confers,[1] but moreover, all the functions of this Order are like so many memorials, emblems and figures which suggest to the mind the most holy thoughts.

[1] Sacramenta debent habere similitudinem aliquam earum rerum quarum sacramenta sunt. Quapropter sacerdos fit similis Christi, sicut panis et liquor similia fiunt corpori Christi. AMALAR. *De off.* Præf.

1. They recall the zeal for the House of God with which the Savior was consumed and which led Him to drive from the Temple those who were profaning its sanctity.[1]

2. They make us think of the supreme authority that He gave to St. Peter over the whole Church, by conferring on him, with the keys, the power of admitting those who are worthy to enter and excluding those whose presence would be a dishonor to her.[2]

3. They announce what will take place at the end of time, when the Angels shall separate the good from the wicked, and when Jesus Christ shall appear in His power to lead the elect into heaven and drive the reprobate into hell.[3]

4. Finally they are for the Ostiary, as the Bishop

[1] Hoc officium Dominus noster nobis initiavit, quando, flagello de funiculis facto, vendentes et ementes de templo ejecit et cathedras nummulariorum evertit. Yvo Carn. *De excell. ord.* II.

[2] Tibi dabo claves regni cœlorum. MATTH., XVI, 19. Beatus cœli janitor, cujus arbitrio claves æterni aditus traduntur. S. HILAR. *In hunc loc.* Clavicularii regni cœlorum sunt omnes sacerdotes. S. CHRYS., *Ibid.*

[3] Initiavit nobis viam novam et viventem per velamen, id est carnem suam. HEB. X, 19.

explains to him, a continual exhortation[1] to the most holy practices of zeal. For knowing that God prefers spiritual temples and living tabernacles and that they worthily glorify Him, he ought not to limit himself to watching over the material temples, but strive to make Him honored in the hearts of the faithful, and should neglect nothing, either to defend them from the power of the devil, or to cause Our Savior and His virtues to reign in them.

Although the exterior functions of this Order, having Jesus Christ as their object, cannot be wanting in grandeur in the eyes of the man of faith, the considerations that we have just made are calculated to extol them still more, and it may well be believed that they have contributed powerfully to excite the zeal with which pious ecclesiastics have always performed them.[2]

[1] Studete ut sic invisibilem Dei domum, corda scilicet fidelium, dictis et exemplis vestris claudatis diabolo et aperiatis Deo. PONTIF. Prædicatores, qui per campanas figurantur, tempore gratiæ fideles ad fidem vocare debent. DURAND. *De off.* I, 1.

[2] For example Nepotian, St. Paulinus, St. Vincent de Paul, etc.

XVIII.

WHAT VIRTUES ARE PROPER TO THIS ORDER?

There are three virtues that are especially required:

1. The first is a fervent devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament, based on what faith teaches about the perfections of the Adorable Victim, the honor which He renders to God, the joy which He gives to heaven, the consolations which He procures for the souls in purgatory, and the innumerable graces which He unceasingly bestows on the whole Church. This devotion ought to animate every ecclesiastic, but above all the fervent Ostiary. It is this that inspires and directs him in the exercise of all his functions.[1] When he opens or closes a door of the church he remembers that it is the door of the *House*

[1] We find in the life of Fr. Yvan a beautiful model of this devotion. This holy priest had an extraordinary love and zeal for the House of God. He passed a great part of his days in the chapel of the monastery which he had founded and of which he was the chaplain. In the evening he took the keys, which he did not wish to entrust to anyone else, and kept them with respect, glorying in being the porter and custodian of Jesus Christ, his Master.

of God.[1] When he rings the bell to announce the Divine Sacrifice, it is with an ardent desire of seeing the faithful hasten to the Altar, or at least unite themselves with all their heart, to the Holy Victim.[2] If he takes care of the sanctuary lamp, he thinks of the perpetual holocaust of which it is the emblem, of the love with which the Heart of the Savior is inflamed for us, of the holy souls who would wish in return to be consumed in His presence, as is the oil. If he cleans the altar, sweeps the sanctuary, or puts away the vestments and the sacred vessels, he thinks of the Holy Virgin and of the services which she rendered to Our Lord in His infancy, or even of St. John Baptist, who prepared the way for Him with so much zeal while recognizing himself to be unworthy

[1] "When passing before a convent in Florence," writes Mother Seton, in her diary, before her conversion to Catholicism, "I saw a young priest unlock his little chapel, with that composed and equal eye as if his soul had entered before." *Life of Mrs. Seton*, by the Rev. C. I. White, D.D., p. 86.

[2] Sister Mary of the Incarnation, hearing the music of the chimes and meditating on the thought that they called the faithful to divine services, was deeply touched and ravished with joy. Fr. Giry also says that through them the Church calls her children to the holy mysteries, gladdens their souls and raises their thoughts to God and the future life.

to kiss His feet. Finally whenever he commences a function or does the least thing in the Church, his gaze turns to the sanctuary and he says in his heart: "The Lord is truly here;[1] He lives behind that door; He looks out through those openings."[2]

2. The second disposition must arise from the first. It is a sincere, generous, vigilant zeal for the honor and the service of the House of God. If the Ostiary has this zeal in his heart he will like to be in the Church as the House of his Heavenly Father. He will live as much as he can before the Holy Altar, like St. Charles, who found there all his delight, like the Blessed Curé of Ars, who could not bear to be far from it.[3] He will take care to maintain cleanliness and decency in the holy place. His happiness will be to embellish and decorate it with suitable ornaments.[4] If his zeal be fervent

[1] Vere Dominus est in loco isto. GEN., XXVIII, 16.

[2] En ipse stat post parietem nostrum, respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per cancellos. CANT., II, 10.

[3] Si quis vult Pontifex non tam vocabulo esse quam merito, imitetur Moysen, imitetur Aaron, de quibus dicitur quod non discedunt de domo Domini. CORP. JUR. *Dist.* 36, Can. *Si quis vult.*

[4] Maxime clerico convenit ornare Dei templum decore congruo, ut etiam hoc cultu aula Domini resplendeat. S. AMB. *De off. min.* II, 21.

he will leave nothing undone in his efforts to make silence, recollection and prayer[1] reign in the body of the Church as well as in the sanctuary; he will not hesitate to recall the sanctity of the place to those who forget it, and will do all he can to banish distractions and disorder.[2] If his zeal be vigilant the doors of the Church will be opened and shut on time, the bell for the services will ring at the appointed hour, the employees will give an example of piety, and in the sacristy as well as in the Church, all will be kept in order and security.[3]

3. The third disposition is a scrupulous fidelity to preserve, in the best possible state, all that is used in the worship of God, and is valuable. In recom-

[1] Omnia quæ videt perversa satagit corripi, cupit emendari. Non quiescit. Si emendari non potest, gemit. S. Aug. *In Joan.* III, 2.

[2] When St. Vincent de Paul was in church, he always preserved great modesty and profound silence. If anyone spoke to him, he would, if possible, lead him outside, acting thus even with prelates, being always careful to avoid giving offense.

[3] Mens Christo dedita æque et in majoribus et in minoribus intenta est. Erat ergo sollicitus Nepotianus, si niteret altare, si parietes absque fuligine, si pavimenta tersa, si sacrarium mundum, si vasa luculenta. Non minus, non majus negligebat officium. Ubicumque eum quæreres in ecclesia invenires. S. Hier, *Epist.* XXV, *ad Heliod.*

mending this care to the Ostiary, the Bishop seems to wish to remind him that the first ecclesiastic rejected, was lost for having been lacking in delicacy and having turned to his own profit the gifts made to the Savior and put by Him in the keeping of His disciple.

Who can doubt that by the exercise of these virtues, the ecclesiastic will please God very much, acquire many merits and obtain great graces from Heaven?

XIX.

IS THE GRACE OF THIS ORDER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE AND OF FREQUENT USE IN THE HOLY MINISTRY?

In the present state of discipline, the Ostiary, so long as he remains in the rank of simple Minor, rarely has the opportunity of exercising his functions; but once a priest, and above all a pastor, he continually is in a position to fulfill its duties, and it is of the utmost importance that he should have its spirit.

1. It is important that he should observe with punctuality the time fixed for the celebration of Mass and of the Holy Offices and see that others do

the same. Experience shows how much the piety of the faithful depends on this exactitude. In parishes where the priests do not establish regularity, or where the Masses are said at variable hours, sometimes earlier, sometimes later, pious persons, disturbed in their habits or in the accomplishment of their duties, lose the habit of assisting at the services and end by resigning themselves to come no more. Many of the faithful dispense themselves, or involuntarily miss Mass, even on Sundays. It is, for a great many, a pretext for arriving late without any scruple. Indeed it often happens that everyone murmurs against the lack of system and the whims of the Pastor. What is necessary in order to prevent these abuses? Follow the rules of the Church, and correspond with the grace received in the first of the Minor Orders. *Sit fidelissima cura ad distinctionem certarum horarum, ad invocandum nomen Domini.*

2. It is not less important that the Pastor have a true zeal for the honor of the House of God. This is also a point of great importance for the edification of the Faithful. Who has not been edified and consoled when, passing through a parish and entering

the church to salute the Most Holy Sacrament, he has recognized in the manner in which the church was kept, a vigilant and religious solicitude, when he has remarked exquisite cleanliness in the sanctuary, the altar freshly decorated, the lamp well kept, the benches perfectly arranged, the floor in good condition and carefully swept? Has he not then rejoiced in the thought that Our Lord had there a minister imbued with His holy religion and animated with love for Him? If this spectacle makes such an impression on a stranger who chances to have an occasional glimpse of it, what effect must it not produce on the souls of the parishioners who have it habitually before their eyes? So sensible a proof of the piety of their Pastor impresses deeply upon them his faith in the Real Presence and in the Divinity of the Holy Sacrifice. Seeing him take so much care to honor the Son of God in the Eucharist, they also feel obliged to do all they can in His honor. They come more often to visit Him. They pray to Him with more confidence and ardor. Just the reverse would happen if they were to observe negligence on the part of their Pastor, want of religion, betraying itself in the uncleanliness, and the disorderly condi-

tion of his church. Devotion to the Holy Sacrament, love of Communion, a liking for divine service would not be slow in decreasing in that parish, and the priest who would be the cause of it might well fear lest he see accomplished in himself this threat of the Lord to the ministers of the Old Law: "*If you will not lay it to heart to give glory to My Name, I will curse your blessings; yea, I will curse them, because you have not laid it to heart.*"[1]

3. Finally, it is important that great respect should reign in the House of God, especially during services. What sadder spectacle than to see Mass said in haste, without recollection, the Offices celebrated with negligence in a perfunctory way, sacraments administered in an inattentive and undignified manner! What is more scandalous than to hear in the church, sometimes even in the sanctuary, ecclesiastics speaking in a loud voice, employees talking among themselves or with the faithful about the most profane things, musicians and chanters setting an example of carelessness, at the very time when they should be thinking only of singing the praises of God. These disorders do not exist when the Pas-

[1] Mal., ii. 1.

tor has preserved the spirit of his first Orders and when he has truly taken to heart the honor of His Divine Master. He chooses for his employees pious Christians or at least such as are regular and faithful in the performance of their duties. He instructs the children with care and controls them by his modesty and gravity. He takes care that nothing unbecoming takes place in the church; that everything be edifying and calculated to make one think of God—marriages and baptisms, catechism classes and sermons, great solemnities and the ordinary ceremonies.[1] In this way, the divine service becomes a continual sermon; the church is truly a house of prayer, and when the faithful are called thither it may be said that their hearts are closed to evil suggestions and opened to thoughts of faith and to the inspirations of grace: *Ut corda fidelium claudantur diabolo et aperiantur Deo.*[2]

[1] The same singers and the same melodies that are heard in the theatre should not be permitted in the church; neither should torches and candelabra, such as are seen in parlors, be placed on the altar; nor should material, such as might attract attention at a ball, be used to decorate the front of the altar.

[2] PONTIF. *De Ostiar.*

XX.

ARE THE PASTORS WHOSE CHURCHES ARE BADLY KEPT AND UNCLEAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPRESSIONS WHICH THEY PRODUCE ON THE MINDS OF THE FAITHFUL?

They ought to impute to themselves the suspicions that others often conceive regarding their faith and piety. How indeed can one help but judge unfavorably the Pastor and clergy of a parish, if one habitually sees what, according to a pious author, is still to be found in some country places:[1]

1. In the church, a soiled floor covered with filth and spittal, the wall green and corroded by mold, the seats overturned or scattered about, the windows broken, the lamp dirty and often unlighted, the communion cloth always hanging over the rail, the catafalque never removed, the baptismal font a stranger to sponge or brush, cobwebs manteling arches and windows, statues and paintings so coarse that they rather provoke derision than invite to prayer, thick layers of dust covering the stalls, the

[1] See Th. Bernard, *la Messe*, t. Ier, p. 50; Caussette *Manrèse*, t. II, p. 276.

credence table, the confessionals; a sacristan who takes every liberty even in the sanctuary, before the tabernacle, and sometimes on the altar, the children of the catechism classes playing and talking at the top of their voices, without restraint.

2. In the sacristy, a water tank without water or towel, a rusty censer, broken or dirty cruets, the processional cross and funeral cloth of repulsive uncleanliness, a vessel for holy water full of verdigris, the surplice and stole which are used for Extreme Unction rolled together around the burse, the holy oil stocks thrown in some corner, the altar-boys playing boisterously, even with religious objects, finally laymen who come and go amazed at this disorder.

3. In the cupboards, broken cinctures, dirty cruets missals soiled and torn, albs condemned to serve until they are in tatters, chasubles frayed, palls and corporals stained and worn out, purificators and corporals which have been used, thrown pell-mell into a corner, with the rest of the linen, waiting to be washed.

4. In the side of the altar, a cupboard full of all kinds of rubbish; on the altar, even, in place of decent covering, reliquaries or candlesticks covered with

wax and rust; in the tabernacle, a corporal yellow with age, the ciborium, pyx and other sacred vessels covered with stains; on the altar steps a worn-out carpet, bearing the marks of heavy shoes that have tramped on it; at one side, the bell overturned, some prayer books open, the leaves torn, sometimes even heaps of dust or long trails of charcoal.[1]

Could an ecclesiastic who had this disorder before his eyes every day and who did nothing to remedy it, believe that he had received the disposition asked of God for the Ostiary by the Bishop:[2] *fidelissima cura in domo Dei?* And could he without blushing read the commands drawn up by the Lord for the Levites of the Old Law, for the service of the temple and the altar?

[1] P. Valuy, *Manuel.* See any of the recent works on the care of the church and sacristy.

[2] Cf. Exod., xxvi, xxvii; II Kings, vii; Heb., ix, etc.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORDER OF LECTOR.

XXI.

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF LECTOR AND HOW IS IT CONFERRED?

1. The Lectorate is the Order which confers on ecclesiastics the right to read the Sacred Books in the assembly of the faithful, together with the special graces necessary to perform this duty well.[1] As it is exercised within the Church and has as its object the very Word of God, the Order of Lector has always been regarded as superior to that of Ostiary.[2] In the Greek Church it is the only Order in use below that of Sub-deacon.

2. In conferring this Order, the Bishop makes the ordinands touch the book which contains the lessons or prophecies, which are read in the Mass; and he

[1] Quod in vobis Deus impleat per gratiam suam. PONTIF. *Ad lect.*

[2] Quid ergo amplius est? Primum quidem quia credita sunt illis eloquia Dei. ROM., III, 1.

addresses them in these words: Receive and be dispensers of the Word of God, participants, if you faithfully and usefully fulfil your office, with those who from the beginning have administered well the Word of God.[1]

XXII.

WHAT MYSTERIOUS SIGNIFICATIONS ARE FOUND IN THE ORDINATION AND IN THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LECTOR?

1. In the ordination of the Lector we see expressed, in action as well as in word, the power and the grace which the Bishop confers on him.[2]

2. His principal function is both a memorial and a prophecy. As a memorial it recalls the solemn reading which the Savior made one Sabbath-day in the Synagogue of Nazareth.[3]

As a prophecy it predicts the happiness that we shall one day experience when we see disclosed, in

[1] Accipite et estote verbi Dei relatores, habituri, si fideliter et utiliter impleveritis officium vestrum, partem cum iis qui verbum Dei administraverunt ab initio. PONTIF.

[2] Accipite et estote relatores verbi Dei. PONTIF.

[3] Dominus noster Jesus Christus usque ad lectoris sese curvavit officium. S. AMB. *In Luc.* IV, 45. Hoc officium in

the bosom of the Eternal Father, the uncreated truth, that divine Word, the trace of which we now with difficulty discover under the veil of the Scriptures.[1] The Lector should often call to mind these thoughts that he may have for his functions the esteem that they merit and discharge them with true religion.

XXIII.

IS THE PUBLIC READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURES THE SOLE OBJECT OF THE POWER AND GRACE WHICH THIS ORDER CONFERS?

It is not the sole object, though it is the principal one.

1. The Lector is deputed to give, in the name of the Church, to the faithful assembled together, such edifying readings as the Pastor may judge to be useful for his flock. In the first centuries the Acts of the Martyrs were frequently read after the Holy Scripture. Moreover, when the Lector ad-

propria persona ostendit, quando in medio seniorum librum Isaiæ prophetæ aperiens, distincte ad intelligendum legit: Spiritus Domini super me: propterea unxit me; evangelizare pauperibus misit me, etc. Yvo Carn., *De excell. ord.*

[1] Agnus venit, et accepit de dextera sedentis in throno librum; et cum aperuisset librum, vidit. Apoc. v, 7.

dressed the catechumens he added to the reading of the Sacred Text some short and familiar explanations of the principal points of Christian Doctrine. Thus catechizing is one of the functions of this Order.[1] At least the Lector is one of those who receive a special appointment to this ministry, and a special grace properly to exercise it.

2. The grace of the Lectorate includes all that is necessary or useful for the Lector, that he may acquit himself of his duties worthily and profitably.[2] It must, consequently, give attraction and facility for all ecclesiastical studies, for Holy Scripture, for Dogmatic and Moral Theology, for Church History, for the lives and writings of the saints; let us add also for Church music, since the lessons are not simply read but chanted in solemn offices. The Church esteems this grace very much and earnestly begs the Savior that His ministers may not fail to profit by it.[3]

[1] Ejus quoque partes erant prima religionis chrisianæ rudimenta fidelibus tradere. Catec. Conc., p. II. *De ordine.*

[2] Ad ædificationem fidelium absque omni mendacio falsitatis. PONTIF.

[3] Benedicere dignare hos famulos tuos, ut assiduitate lectionum instructi sint atque ordinati, et agenda dicant et dicta opere compleant. PONTIF.

XXIV.

ARE READING BEFORE THE FAITHFUL, THE CHANT, STUDY, AND THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN SO DIFFICULT THAT A SPECIAL GRACE IS NEEDED TO PERFORM THEM WELL?

1. This grace is far from being superfluous, for there are few ecclesiastics who are not more or less deficient in the qualities requisite for them.

It is generally acknowledged that the gift of reading well in public is not common, that it demands natural dispositions, application and a certain culture.[1] When one addresses an audience, it is not enough that he understand what he reads, he must also make himself understood. For this, it is necessary, not only to be heard, but to hold the audience and to make them feel what is read. How many there are who lack the gift, and have not acquired this art! How many there are who appear to care little for it! Therefore how often reading is useless, even fatiguing! All reading that does not interest is tiresome. Now, how can one take an interest in what is read, how give his attention to it, when the

[1] DUBOIS, *Zeal in the ministry.* Advice to preachers.

reader himself is not interested in it, when he gives to it only half of his attention, when he does not seem to have a true desire to make his thoughts and sentiments pass into the minds and hearts of his hearers?[1]

2. Pretty much the same may be said of the Chant. A selection produces very different impressions, according to the persons who sing it and the dispositions in which they are at the time. Executed without intelligence, by a man who is preoccupied, inattentive, indifferent, the chant will be without expression, it will mean nothing to the soul. To make any impression the one who renders it must be penetrated with the thoughts and sentiments which have inspired its composition.

3. As for ecclesiastical studies it is natural to hold them in esteem; but every one knows that for success in them ardor, application, constancy and efficient help are necessary.

[1] 1. Qui ad lectoratum provehitur, litterarum scientia debet esse instructus, ut sensum verborum intelligat, vim accentuum sciat, distincte legat, ne confusione pronuntiationis intellectum auditoribus auferat. Attendat quid sit indicative legendum, quid interrogative; ubi sit in oratione distinctio, media distinctio; quia et hæc male servata intellectum perturbant et risum provocant. Auribus autem et cordi debet consulere. Yvo Carnut.

4. Finally, the art of instructing children, of awakening their interest, of holding their attention, of making them understand and retain the lessons that are given them is more difficult than one might think. What is more common than to see men of attainments who do not know how to accommodate their knowledge to the mind of children and who are unable to make them imbibe and retain their teaching? And where is the earnest and experienced catechist who does not feel the need of heaven's aid and who does not try to obtain it before his instructions?

II. Moreover, there is another extremely important remark to be made. For an ecclesiastic to acquit himself well of his charge, it is not enough that he perform his duties to the satisfaction of most of his hearers: he must fulfil them in such a manner as to glorify God and edify the faithful: *Posui vos ut fructum afferatis*, says Our Lord, *et ut fructus vester maneat.*[1] He should so act as to produce fruit for heaven, solid, enduring effects. Now who would be presumptuous enough to think he can do this without many graces? To read or sing before the faithful

[1] JOHN, XV, XVI.

without self-love, without self-consciousness, with the sole desire of honoring God,[1] to give oneself up to study with courage and constancy, with aims supernatural and pure, to instruct children and the ignorant with a constant zeal, without being discouraged by their thoughtlessness and their slowness of mind, without self-complacency in our own talents, knowledge, and success,[2] these are conditions which are absolutely necessary that one may be blameless before God. But to say that this is easy and not beyond one's ordinary power, would show little knowledge of human nature and little practice in self-examination.

[1] Sunt enim qui de vocis suæ modulatione gloriantur, nec tantum gaudent de dono gratiæ, sed alios spernunt. Tanta est levitas vocis, forsitan et mentis. Non est levis jactura gratiæ spiritualis levitate cantus abduci a sensuum utilitate, et plus insinuandis intendere vocibus quam insinuandis rebus. S. Bern. *Epist.* cccxcviii.

[2] Tutius veritas auditur quam prædicatur, quoniam cum prædicatur, vix non surrepit cuivis hominum quantulacumque jactantia in qua utique inquinantur pedes. S. Aug. *In Joan,* vii.

XXV.

HAVE PRIESTS, EXERCISING THE HOLY MINISTRY, ALSO NEED OF THIS GRACE?

It is in the holy ministry that it is most necessary:

1. *To read and sing in Church*—How many ecclesiastics there are who read and sing very poorly, who, far from edifying and instructing when they read the Gospel or Episcopal mandates, do but fatigue their hearers; who deliver a sermon, chant the office, recite the liturgical prayers, even those of the Mass, in a manner unbecoming, wanting in reverence, and even unintelligible. Perhaps they imagine that since these prayers are in Latin, a language which the people do not understand, it makes little difference how they are recited. This is an error. For even when people do not understand the signification of the words of the Office, they readily interpret the manner in which they are pronounced, and discern the dispositions which a certain tone, accent, or manner of reading or of singing, denotes. Anyone can perceive a great difference between the singing of an ecclesiastic who is recollected and who understands the words which he pronounces, and that of

a man who is superficial or inattentive, and thinks only of discharging the external requirements of his office; between reading which is hasty and indistinct, and reading which is grave, attentive and devout. The latter leads to recollection and prayer; the former is a source of distraction. One inspires respect, the other is distressing or ridiculous.[1]

2. *To apply oneself to private reading and study.* It is particularly in the fulfilment of this duty that ecclesiastics have need of the aid of heaven.[2] How many there are who, because they have not cultivated the spirit of study nor applied themselves carefully to the studies of their state, can speak only of profane news or of trivial things; who are incapable of instructing, of exhorting or of giving sound advice; who give snap judgments; who, in the pulpit, instead of enlightening and instructing the faithful, tire them with vain repetitions![3] But it is not so with

[1] S. Isidore of Spain: *De off. eccles.*, I, II, ch. ii.

[2] Cur non illa tempora quibus ab ecclesia vacas, lectioni impendas? Cur non Christum revisas, Christum alloquaris, Christum audias? Illum alloquimur, cum oramus; illum audimus, cum divina legimus oracula. Quid nobis cum alienis domibus? Quid nobis cum fabulis? S. Amb. *De off. minist.* I, 20.

[3] Nolo te declamatorem esse et rabulam, garrulumque sine ratione, sed mysteriorum peritum et sacramentorum Dei tui eruditissimum. S. Hieron, *Epist.* xxxiv, *ad Nepot.*

all. There are those who have always loved what belongs to their holy state, and have studied it as they should, with faith, piety and humility, and so have acquired varied and solid information. Such men can teach in an exact, precise and interesting manner the entire Christian doctrine, dogmatic as well as moral. If they have not received from heaven extraordinary talent, their application and constancy have made up for it. By dint of work and reflection, they have made themselves, as St. Jerome said of Nepotian, an inner library, a treasure house of knowledge, which they carry with them everywhere and upon which they draw for all their needs. To the enlightenment which directs them and enables them to settle all doubts, they join the zeal which makes use of it and the holiness which wins and penetrates hearts.[1]

[1] Quis mihi dabit homines litteratos et sanctos in Ecclesiis Dei præsse pastores, si non in omnibus, certe in aliquibus saltem! S. Bern, *Serm.* xxxvi *in Cant.* Sermo Nepotiani per omne convivium de Scripturis aliquid proponere, libenter audire, respondere verecunde et ingenuo pudore, qui ornabat ætatem, quid cujus esset simpliciter confiteri? Illud aiebat Tertulliani, istud Cypriani; hoc Lactantii, illud Hilarii, id est: in hunc modum est locutus Arnobius. Lectione assidua et meditatione diuturna pectus suum bibliothecam fecerat Christi. S. Hieron. *Epist.* xxxv *ad Heliod.*

3. *To teach Christian truth and to inculcate the maxims of salvation.* A good catechist becomes naturally a good preacher. And, besides, is it not one of the principal duties of a pastor always to instruct children and form them to the practices of a Christian life?[1] Happy, then, the ecclesiastic who has received and cultivated the grace of the catechist, that gift of accommodating the Word of God to the range of the lowliest minds and of adapting it to their dispositions—that art, so salutary and so edifying, of forgetting oneself in attending to the needs of all, and of listening to no other inspirations save those of faith and charity! Nothing will produce more graces and blessings.[2]

[1] Episcopi saltem dominicis et aliis festivis diebus pueros in singulis parochiis fidei rudimenta et obedientiam erga Deum et parentes diligenter ab iis ad quos spectabit doceri curabunt. Conc. Trid. Sess. xxiv, 4.

[2] Quid enim prodest clavis aurea, si aperire quod volumus non potest? Aut quid obest lignea, quando nihil quærimus nisi patere quid clausum est? S. Aug. *De Doct. christ.* vi, 10.

XXVI.

WHAT ARE THE VIRTUES CONFERRED UPON THE LECTOR WITH THE GRACE OF HIS ORDER AND WHICH WE HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT IN HIM?

Here are the principal virtues and the most important dispositions which should animate him:

1. A great love for the Holy Scriptures and for the works which explain their meaning and set forth their doctrine.[1]

2. A deep and vivid faith in the revealed truths which by virtue of his office he has to preach.[2]

3. Great fidelity in practising these truths, in joining example to doctrine.[3]

[1] Attende lectioni. I Tim., iv, 13. Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudiendum in justitia, ut perfectus sit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum instructus. II Tim., iii, 16.

[2] Quod ore legitis, corde credatis. Pontif. Habentes eumdem spiritum fidei, sicut scriptum est: Credidi, propter quod locutus sum, et nos credimus, propter quod et loquimur. II Cor., iii, 13.

[3] Et agenda dicant et dicta opere compleant, ut in utroque sanctæ Ecclesiæ consulant. Pont. *De Lect.* Sicut enim corpus sine spiritu mortuum est, ita et fides sine operibus mortua est. Jac., ii, 26.

4. An active and diligent zeal for the religious education of children.[1]

5. A love for ecclesiastical studies, that is to say, a living and pious attraction which prompts him to study what he ought so that he may become capable of worthily fulfilling the duties of his ministry.[2] It will appear that this Order already supposes a very high degree of perfection. No wonder that it was regarded in the first centuries as being, in a measure, a recompense for the highest services, and as an honor worthy of the most meritorious. St. Meletius conferred this dignity on St. Chrysostom, who exercised it for many years in the Church of Antioch; and we see in the letters of St. Cyprian that he regarded it as a fitting honor for two confessors of the faith whose constancy had won the admiration of the Church.[3]

[1] Proverbium est: adolescens, juxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab ea. PROV. XXII, 6.

[2] Fili, a juventute tua excipe doctrinam et usque ad canos invenies sapientiam. ECCLI., VI, 18. Quæ in juventute tua non congregasti, quomodo in senectute tua invenies? ECCLI., XXV, 5. Disce quod doceas. S. HIER. *Epist. ad Nep.*

[3] Nihil magis congruit voci quæ Dominum confessa est, quam celebrandis divinis lectionibus personare; post verba sublimia quæ Christi martyrium prolocuta sunt, evangelium legere unde martyres fiunt, ad pulpitum post catastam venire. S. CYP. *Epist.* XXXIII.

XXVII.

ARE WE TO ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE FUNCTION OF CATECHIST AND TO THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN?

We cannot esteem this function too highly nor take too much pains to fulfil it well.

1. Indeed teaching the catechism is first of all an effective and easy way to make religion known and virtue loved. Children who are preparing for First Communion are usually not very thoughtful, but they have neither conceit nor prejudice. They are as yet neither depraved by vice not blinded by sophistry. One who speaks to them with kindness nearly always finds them confiding and ready to learn; their tender age renders them susceptible of the best impressions, and the grace which they have received in Baptism disposes them to believe, without hesitation, all the truths of religion. This is the time to teach them these truths, to speak to them of God, to make known to them Jesus Christ, His mysteries, His virtues, His Church, His precepts. If one does this with piety, kindness and zeal, they conceive a high idea of God and they realize how much gratitude and devotion they owe

Our Lord. Now to give a child the knowledge of the true God, to make him love the Savior, to attach him to the service of both, is to put him on the road to heaven and to open its gates to him.[1] Of course, it is not certain that he will never leave the right path. The best instructed child may forget the lessons which he has received. But if he has been well prepared for his First Communion, the remembrance which he keeps of it will inspire repentance for his faults and will, in all probability, bring him back to the practice of virtue. It will make him at least receive with eagerness the assistance which will be offered him at the hour of his death, to prepare him to appear before God.

2. It is hard to see what other means could supply the place of these instructions and produce the same effect. To count on the care of parents or teachers, on the reading that the children will do, on the ser-

[1] Hæc est vita æterna ut cognoscant te solum Deum verum et quem misisti Jesum Christum. JOAN., XVII, 3. A cujus veritatis cognitione dependet tota hominum salus. S. THOM., p. 1, q. 1. a. 1. Illud affirmamus, magnam eorum partem qui æternis suppliciis damnantur, eam calamitatem perpetuo subire ob ignorantiam mysteriorum fidei quæ scire et credere necessario debemus, ut inter electos cooptemur. BENED. XIV.

mons that they will hear, on the advice they will receive in more advanced age, is a delusion. The majority of parents are lacking in the knowledge, authority and zeal necessary properly to instruct their family in the truths of religion, and the teaching given to children in schools seldom aims at forming them to the Christian life. As for sermons, the people who need instruction do not come to hear them, and moreover what do they learn from them? The priest often preaches on subjects drawn from circumstances, and for the benefit of pious souls who are supposed to be already instructed in the essential truths of religion. Those who, in their childhood, have not been well instructed in the catechism, generally pass their whole lives in almost complete ignorance of religion. We sometimes find aged men who scarcely know how to make the sign of the cross, and who could not explain what it signifies. How can they be faithful to the most simple practises of Christianity? And when you succeed in making them observe them exteriorly, what fruit do they derive from them? How can they make good confessions when they do not know the conditions which the Sacrament of Penance

demands, and the effects which it should produce? In what manner do they receive Holy Communion, when they do not know how to discern the Body and Blood of the Lord? How can they profess and defend their faith when they are ignorant of its tenets and of the solid reasons on which it is based?

3. All souls redeemed by the Blood of the Savior have the same value and the same destiny, but each is dear to God in proportion to the sincerity of its love for Him and the worthiness of the worship it offers Him. Do not, then, the souls of children commend themselves more than any others to the care of His ministers?[1] Would it not show an absence of supernatural motives and a spirit far removed from that of the Savior to neglect this multitude of young souls, so upright, so confident and so docile, in order to confine oneself to the care of a small number of persons better educated, undoubtedly more distinguished in the eyes of the world, but less loved

[1] Nescio prorsus si quidquam majus esse possit quam parvulorum animas, partem non indignam horti ecclesiastici, quasi plantare et irrigare. Qui memor est delictorum juventutis suæ et aliorum plurimorum, sicut mihi conscius sum, efferveat ad hoc opus quod tegit peccata et tegendo remittit. GERSON, *De parvulis ad Christ. trahendis.*

by God, farther removed from the kingdom of Heaven, less docile to the movements of grace?[1]

XXVIII.

WHAT MUST ONE DO TO BECOME A GOOD CATECHIST?

The best means is to apply oneself to prayer, to read good books on the subject and to put their recommendations into practice.

1. By prayer one obtains grace from Heaven, becomes penetrated with Christian truths, acquires the unction of the Holy Ghost, true zeal, and a supernatural love for the souls which he is to initiate into the Christian life. Now, that is the essential thing. "The catechist should, above all, love his children in God and God in his children, and he must be loved by them. He has to teach them, by true charity, to pray, to adore their Creator, to repent of the sins

[1] Quis tumescens de sua vel magnitudine vel scientia, parvitatem deinceps parvulorum, ignorantiam vel imbecillitatem audebit aspernare, quando tu, o piissime Jesu, qui es Deus in sæcula, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi, usque ad castissimos parvulorum amplexus beata brachia mansuetus inclinas! GERSON, *De parvulis ad Christ. trahendis.*

by which they have offended Him, to correct the faults which displease Him and which disfigure their souls. . . . . If you cannot say with St. John and St. Paul: *Filioli, quos diligo in veritate . . . . quos iterum parturio,* both you and they will be wanting in that which assures the divine fruit of pastoral teaching."[1]

2. By good and pious reading, particularly of Holy Scripture[2] and of the best works on the catechism,[3] and on the subjects of which it treats, you will by degrees become enlightened, your heart will be filled with the most touching sentiments and you

[1] Mgr. DUPANLOUP, *The ministry of catechizing.* Facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum, tanquam si nutrix foveat filios suos. I THESS., II, 7. Si usitata et parvulis congruentia sæpe repetere fastidimus, congruamus eis per fraternum, paternum, maternumque amorem, et copulatis cordi eorum etiam nobis nova videbuntur. Non recedat de pectore cogitatio gallinæ illius quæ languidis plumis teneros fœtus operit, et susurrantes pullos confracta voce advocat. S. AUG. *De catec. rud.* 10.

[2] Quotidiana lectione S. Scripturarum infundat oleum sensui suo et paret mentis lucernam quæ, juxta præceptum Evangelii, lucebit omnibus qui in domo sunt. THEOPH. Alex. IIe *Ep. pasc.* Disce cor Dei in verbis Dei. S. GREG M. *Epist.* XXI.

[3] Mgr. DUPANLOUP, *supra.* The Method of St. Sulpice for the organising of Catechisms. *Catechist's Manual,* A course of Lessons for the First Year, etc.

will be enabled to instruct and exhort in a useful and profitable manner.[1]

3. Finally, if you do your best to put into practice what you have thus acquired, with the aid of a wise and experienced guide, there is no doubt that you will become capable and industrious as well as fervent and zealous in the holy art of gaining young souls to God and in leading them to know, love and serve Our Lord Jesus Christ.[2]

XXIX.

IS IT IMPORTANT FOR AN ECCLESIASTIC TO BEGIN EARLY THE STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE?

A young man who feels himself called to the ecclesiastical state cannot begin this study too soon. With due application he will derive from it inestimable advantage. He will develop his knowledge, grow in piety and prepare himself to exercise to good purpose the ministry of the Word.

[1] Si repletæ fuerint nubes, imbrem super terram effundent Eccl. xi, 3.

[2] Omne tempus suum J. Gerson orando, meditando, concionando, componendo, et præsertim parvulos in fidei christianæ rudimentis quotidie informando impendebat. *Vita Gerson.*

1. He will draw from the Scriptures a solid and comprehensive knowledge of Our Lord, His life, His mysteries, His doctrine, His virtues, His works, His Church, in a word, of all the principal things which a priest, charged with the care of souls, is bound to know and to make known to the faithful.[1] Without this knowledge an ecclesiastic would be incapable, not only of properly instructing others, but even of himself profiting by the principal means of instruction and edification that his state offers him. In fact, how can one, who has not studied the Bible, understand the Breviary, the Missal, the liturgical prayers? How can he appreciate the passages of Scripture cited by theologians, the arguments they deduce from them, the moral rules which they establish? What knowledge can he acquire of the writings of the Fathers and of spiritual works? Unless he is familiar with the ideas and expressions of the sacred writers, he cannot understand the language of ecclesiastical writers. He will not possess the key to Christian literature. He will be incapable of perceiving the merits of the best books and of appreciating their beauties.

[1] Scripturarum ignoratio Christi est ignoratio. S. Hieron., *In Ps.* Prol.

2. While the study of the holy books will enlighten his mind and furnish his memory, it will also edify his soul and animate his piety. This study, made regularly as it should be, with faith and devotion, has almost as much power as prayer to draw us away from sin, raise us above the senses and establish us in the way of perfection. It detaches us from the world and preserves us from dissipation. It fills the mind with holy thoughts and the heart with pious sentiments. It brings the soul into an atmosphere of faith, religion, purity, sanctity and makes it live in heaven rather than on earth. It keeps it unceasingly in touch with all that is most august and most holy, with God, Jesus Christ, the Prophets, the blessed, the angels. It accustoms it to refer all to the Man-God and to consider Him as the fullness of all perfection, the principle of all light, the source of all gifts.[1]

3. In the third place, the study of the Scriptures prepares us to exercise fruitfully the ministry of the word, teaching us at one and the same time what to say to the faithful and how to say it.

"The better versed an ecclesiastic is in Holy

[1] Qui adhæret Domino unus Spiritus est. I Cor., vi, 17.

Scripture," says St. Augustine, "the more useful things can he teach and the more pious exhortations can he make; the more he discerns the poverty of his own speech, the more he ought to draw on the riches of Scripture."[1] The holy Doctors did scarcely anything else, in their preaching, than explain and develop the Bible; and they found in its text all that they had need of, for the instruction of the faithful, sanctification of souls, refutation of error and correction of vice: *ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudiendum in justitia.*[2]

Not only does the habitual study of Scripture supply the priest with the knowledge he needs in order to instruct and exhort; but it gives to his words the tone and accent required in order to touch the hearts of the faithful and benefit them.

When we are conversant with the inspired authors we become imbued with their ideas and animated by their spirit, and we appropriate their language. Figures in relief pressed into a softer composition,

[1] S. Aug. *De doct. Christ.*, iv, 5. Hæc proponens, bonus eris minister Christi Jesu, enutritus verbis fidei et bonæ doctrinæ quam assecutus es. I Tim., iv, 6. Ab infantia sacras litteras nosti, quæ te possunt instruere. II Tim., iii, 15.

[2] II Cor., iii, 16.

give to it the property of reproducing other reliefs of the same kind. So it is with the thoughts of God. Engraved on our souls, they are as moulds which communicate their forms to our own thoughts. When afterwards we speak to the people and expound the doctrine of the sacred writers to them, the Holy Spirit seems to speak by our lips as He spoke by theirs.[1] Men recognise in us the spirit of faith, the conviction, the note of piety, the holy unction which is the resultant of an admirable mingling of tenderness and authority, all that characterizes the man of God, devoted to the sanctification of souls. And nothing edifies the faithful more than to see, from the language of an ecclesiastic in the pulpit, in the catechism class, in the holy tribunal of penance, that he is a man of God, filled with thoughts of God, that his memory is adorned with images and pictures borrowed from the Word of God, that he has trained himself in the school of the sacred authors and that it is natural for him to speak of the things of faith as they spoke of them. Nothing inspires them with more confidence in him or better disposes them to profit by his advice. "A

[1] Si quis loquitur quasi sermones Dei, ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus per Jesum Christum. I Pet., iv, 11.

single passage from Holy Scripture," says P. Lejeune, "makes more impression on the souls of Christians than all human reasoning." "Ecclesiastics who speak the language of the Gospel bear much more fruit," says St. Vincent de Paul, "than all those who fill their sermons with philosophical considerations: for the words of faith are always accompanied with a certain heavenly grace, which secretly insinuates itself and gains for the preacher the hearts of his listeners."

Study Holy Scripture, then, and study it at the proper time, if you wish to become a good catechist and a useful preacher.[1] Read it frequently; read

[1] Fili, a juventute tua excipe doctrinam. In opere enim illius exiguum laborabis et cito edes de generationibus illius. Eccli, vi, 20. Hæc manna in mane juventutis debet colligi; non enim invenitur, nisi mane. Hug. of St. Victor. We might dwell here on the example of the holy Fathers, and all the greatest preachers, particularly of Bossuet. "From the time when he first cast his eye upon the Bible, which was in his second or rhetoric year, he considered as subordinate to it the study of belles lettres, in which he was at that time engaged. The impressions of joy and light, which were aroused in him the first time he found and read a Bible, remained ever present to him and he spoke of it even in his last days. He became first the child and then the man of Scripture and the sacred word. Such was even to the end the character of his mind. He loved the word of God, with a great love. It was his reading of predilection, ever dear to him. Over this book he wished

it every day, and never give it up.[1] Learn in this reading, the language of faith, profitable, according to the Apostle, to touch and convince, to instruct and exhort. Study the heart of God in the Word of God.[2] Study it above all in the Holy Gospel.[3] May this Divine Book be for you the complement of the Holy Eucharist. In the blessed Sacrament Our Lord is with you under the Sacred Species; but there He is silent; in the Gospel He speaks to you, He instructs you, He exhorts you. When you kiss this sacred book is it not as if you received a kiss from His mouth, and when you open it, is it not His lips that open to speak to you?[4] "Come, says

to grow old and die. In his old age he allowed nothing to turn him from this, his last occupation, the only one, in his eyes, worthy of the sanctuary."—SAINTE-BEUVE.

[1] Sollicite cura teipsum probabilem exhibere Deo, operarium inconfusibilem, recte tractantem verbum veritatis. II TIM., II, 15. Amplectentem eum qui secundum doctrinam est fidelem sermonem, ut potens sit exhortari in doctrina sana et eos qui contradicunt arguere. TIT., I, 9.

[2] ST. GREGORY M., *Epist.* IV, 13.

[3] In evangelicis sermonibus semper litteræ junctus est spiritus, et quidquid primo frigere videtur aspectu, si tetigeris, calet. S. HIERON. *In Matth.*, XIV, 14.

[4] Lecto evangelio, codex evangelicus apertus datur sacerdoti osculandus, cæteris vero clausus; ac si dicatur ei: Tibi datum est nosse mysterium regni Dei; cæteris autem in parabolis. HILDEB., *Serm.*, XCIII, 6.

He, "you who have need of wisdom. Take the food which I have prepared for you; drink the wine which I have mingled for you. Leave aside the ways of a child and begin to walk in the way of prudence.[1] Store up my words; keep them with care. They are hidden treasures which will be the wealth, happiness and glory of your soul."[2]

XXX.

HOW SHOULD HOLY SCRIPTURE BE STUDIED?

With a pure intention, sincere piety and untiring application:

1. To study the Word of God from interested and earthly motives would be to profane it. This is St. Bernard's opinion on the subject: "There are those who study simply to understand it: this is curiosity; others to gain reputation: this is vanity; still others to get preferment: this is avarice. But there are also those who study for self-edification

[1] Insipientibus locuta est sapientia; Venite, comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis. Relinquite infantiam et vivite. PROV., IX, 5.

[2] Fili, custodi sermones meos et præcepta mea reconde tibi; serva mandata mea et vives. PROV., VII, 1.

and that they may edify others and this is the intention that we should have so that we may not misuse study and knowledge."[1]

2. To purity of intention should be joined piety and the spirit of faith and prayer. The word of God is God revealing Himself to us. When listening to it, we must adore Him and act as we would in His presence at the foot of Sinai, or upon the mountain where Our Lord preached, or before the Blessed Eucharist. The Son of God communicates His thoughts to us in the Gospel, as He gives us His Body and Blood at the Holy table. We should receive all His words as so many oracles of Truth itself: *Non ut verbum hominum, sed, sicut est vere, verbum Dei.*[2] Moreover we must pray; for to understand His lessons and to profit by them, we need His aid; and how can we obtain it except by invoking His spirit and strving to acquire it by a humble and unceasing uplifting of the heart?[3]

[1] St. Bernard., *In Cant.* xxxvi. Cf. *Imit.*, i, 5.

[2] I Thess., ii, 13. Audiamus evangelium quasi præsentem Dominum. Sursum est dominus, sed etiam hic est veritas Dominus. S. Aug. *In Joan.*, xxx, 1.

[3] Sapiens cor suum tradet ad vigilandum diluculo ad Dominum et in conspectu Altissimi deprecabitur. Aperiet os suum in oratione. Si enim Dominus magnus voluerit, spiritu intelligentiæ replebit illum et ipse tanquam imbres

3. In the third place there is need of application and perseverance. "*Search the Scriptures,*" says the Divine Master;[1] "*attend unto reading, devote reflection to it,*" commands the Apostle.[2] In this study, as in all others, the benefit is in proportion to the application given to it. Truth is the food of the soul. For, since the fall of our first father, God has willed that the soul, like the body, should obtain its food only by dint of painstaking efforts. It is necessary then to put one's self to some trouble in order to understand and retain it. Let us strive to seize each thought clearly and completely, to find the reasons for it, to see its consequences; let us make a collection of the most beautiful verses, translate the most remarkable. This last work is not very commonly done but it is not the least useful. One is more interested in a passage which one has translated, one better appreciates its beauties, and they are more deeply engraved on the memory.[3]

mittet eloquia sapientiæ suæ, et in lege testamenti Domini gloriabitur. Eccli., xxxix, 6–8.

[1] John, v, 39.

[2] I Tim., iv, 13.

[3] Scripturarum alloquia diu terere ac polire debemus, toto animo et corde versantes, ut succus ille spiritualis cibi in omnes se venas animae diffundat. S. Amb. *De Cain et Abel,* ii, 6.

It is true that in many places, the letter of the Scriptures does not offer great difficulties, and with a little intelligence and facility, one can read through most of the inspired books as quickly as any other book. But reading them thus one is not penetrated with the meaning and does not have a thorough knowledge of them. What they offer at first reading is often the least precious of what they contain, and one perceives only very little when one is content to skim over the surface.

"Believe me," says St. Augustine, "the word of God is always sublime, always worthy of God."[1] "Scripture is as the ocean," says St. Ambrose, "one does not suspect at first glance the depths that are hidden in its bosom."[2] "The exterior is not without beauty," says St. Jerome, "but it is within that its marvels are found."[3]

[1] Quidquid est, mihi crede, in scripturis illis, altum et divinum est. S. Aug., *De util. cred.*, vi.

[2] Mare est scriptura, habens in se sensus profundos et altitudinem propheticorum ænigmatum. S. Amb. *Epist.* ii, *ad Cont. Episc.*

[3] Totum quod legimus in divinis libris nitet quidem et fulget etiam in cortice, sed dulcius in medulla est. Qui vult edere nucleum, frangat nucem. S. Hieron., *Epist.* lviii. Sicut in terris latet aurum, ita divinus sensus verbis celatur humanis, et ideo quoties dominica nobis eloquia

As regards the method that should be followed in the study of Holy Scripture, one would do well to consult a special treatise on the subject. In general, the best way would be to read first the easiest passages and reread them frequently. They are the most beautiful as they are the most practical;[1] and the knowledge that one acquires of these is the best preparation for the study of the more obscure passages. As the soul is purified and gains strength by the use of this food, as it draws down grace by prayer and the practice of virtue, it sees the dawn and the light is gradually diffused over all parts of the sacred book.

XXXI.

AGAINST WHAT OUGHT A YOUNG ECCLESIASTIC TO GUARD IN HIS FIRST INSTRUCTIONS?

He must, in the first place, be careful not to say anything inexact, or not conformable with sound doctrine, and then to speak with simplicity, humility and charity.

panduntur, mens vigilet, animus intendat, ut intellectus possit scientiæ cælestis intrare secretum. S. Pet. Chrysol *Serm.* CXXXIX.

[1] Bossuet, *Sur le style et la lecture des Écrivains et des Pères de l'Eglise.* Mabillon *Traité des études*, II, 2.

1. It would be a great fault for him to appear studied in his ideas, expressions, gestures and countenance; to indulge in endless speculations, to make long or frequent citations, to aim at eloquence, to take a domineering tone, or finally either to speak of himself or to speak in such a manner as to make others think of him. On the contrary, it is truly a merit and the best of all secrets for him to expose his thoughts modestly, to express them as he conceives them, without pretention or human respect, to seek to convince and touch all, as he is himself touched and convinced, finally to be satisfied with fulfilling his duty and doing what he can to render himself useful by promoting the glory of God and the sanctification of souls.[1]

2. Ordinarily, first instructions are not very substantial, for you have to be rich in order to give much; but if they have the qualities of which we have just spoken, they will not fail to touch hearts and pro-

[1] Cum quodam fastu quidam arroganter proferunt quod singulariter intellexisse se credunt, et fortasse tunc humilitatem prædicant cum per elationis typum exemplar superbiæ ostentant. At contra verba justorum ex radice humilitatis veniunt ut fructum valeant ferre pietatis, et quidquid salubre potuerint, non tumendo sed compatiendo subministrant. S. Greg. M. *Moral. in Job*, xxiv, 8.

duce excellent results.[1] It is said that St. Philip Neri by a simple address, which he delivered before he was a priest, converted more than thirty students of the University of Rome. Here is an incident not less admirable, drawn from the life of the Blessed Laurence of Brindes, General of the Capuchins, beatified by Pope Leo XIII. When he was still a child, scarcely seven or eight years old, he was called on to give in the Cathedral of Brindes some short instructions to the faithful, following a custom which still exists in certain Churches of Italy. But as in sanctity he was beyond his age, the effects produced by this child voice, so sincere and fervent, were not less marvelous than the interest excited by his precocity. When he had joined the Order of St. Francis, his superiors easily recognized for what ministry God had formed him. So they did

[1] Nec dicimus quamcumque ætatem gratiæ præmaturam, sicut nec seram, cum multos videamus juniorum super senes intelligere, moribus antiquare dies, prævenire tempora meritis et quod ætati deest compensare virtutibus. Bonus Samuel qui loquenti Deo promptus aderat auditor. Bonus et Jeremias qui ante sanctificatus es quam natus. Bonus quoque Daniel, cujus spiritum suscitavit Deus ut sanguinem innoxium liberaret. Denique cani sunt sensus hominis et ætas senectutis vita immaculata. S. Bern. *De mor. Episc.* 1.

not wait until he had attained the age for priesthood in order to impose upon him the duty of preaching the Word of God, and the conversions wrought by his sermons were on a par with the prodigies produced by his first efforts. As he was faithful to the Spirit of God till death, the Church possessed in him a most zealous and powerful apostolic worker.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ORDER OF EXORCIST.

XXXII.

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF EXORCIST AND HOW IS IT CONFERRED?

It is an order which bestows the supernatural power and special grace to command the devil and to drive him from bodies.

1. To confer this Order, the Bishop makes the ordinand touch the book of exorcisms, while he says: "Receive this and commit it to memory, and have power to impose hands on the possessed, be they baptised or catechumens."

2. That an exorcist commands and casts out the devil, is not then in virtue of his personal merits, nor by the power of his prayers alone, nor by a special privilege, as that which was given to some saints, even of the laity; it is by a particular authority attached to his character, the exorcist being

deputed by the Church to that end, according to the intentions of the Savior.[1]

3. The Order of Exorcist is higher than that of Lector. The latter is exercised only over the faithful and has as its only end the imparting of the knowledge of Christian doctrine; the former is exercised over pure spirits, of angelic nature, and it confirms the truths of faith by visible prodigies. St. Martin, the great miracle-worker of the fourth century, considered himself highly honored by it.[2]

XXXIII.

WHAT IS THE MYSTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ORDER?

1. The rite of this ordination expresses, in a sensible manner, the power conferred on the ordinand and the grace attached to it.

2. The ministry of the Exorcist recalls the authority that Jesus Christ exercised over the possessed, in

[1] Accipitis potestatem imponendi manus super energumenos, et per impositionem manuum vestrarum, gratia Spiritus sancti et verbis exorcismi pelluntur spiritus immundi a corporibus obsessis. PONTIF.

[2] Et factus est pavor in omnibus et mirati sunt inter se dicentes: Quia in potestate et virtute etiam spiritibus immundis imperat et exeunt. MARC., I, 27.

order to show that He had come into this world to combat and destroy the reign of the devil.[1] At the same time it presages the ruin of the empire of Satan, and guarantees its total destruction on the Last Day when the fallen angels shall be driven to the depths of hell with their followers.[2]

XXXIV.

CAN THE DEVIL TAKE POSSESSION OF A HUMAN BEING AND SUBSTITUTE HIS ACTION FOR THAT OF THE SOUL ON THE BODY?

To deny the possibility of diabolical possessions, or even to claim that no one has ever seen a real one, would be to oppose the teaching of the inspired books, the testimony of the Fathers, the belief of the Church and most historical facts.

1. Let one open the New Testament and he will find in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles a

[1] Hoc officio usus est Dominus, quando saliva sua tetigit aures surdi et muti, et dixit: Ephpheta, quod est: Adaperire. Yvo Carn. *Serm. de ord.*—Exorcistam se indicavit, ejiciens dæmonia. Hug. a. S. Vict. *Spec. eccl.*, v. 5.

[2] Finis, cum tradiderit regnum Deo et Patri, cum evacuaverit omnem principatum et potestatem et virtutem. Novissima autem inimica destruetur mors. I Cor., xv, 24.

number of manifest possessions and miraculous deliverances worked by the word of the Savior or by the invocation of His Name.[1] To account for these possessions on the score of natural or imaginary diseases would be to charge the sacred writers with error or imposture, and to attribute to the Savior and His Apostles a way of speaking which denotes delusion, if not deliberate falsehood.

2. The Holy Fathers expressly attest that possessions were still frequent in their time, among infidels, and that the name of the Savior continues to exercise over demons the same empire as His presence. The sight of exorcisms was one of the most ordinary causes of conversions. *Edatur hic aliquis quem a dæmone agi constat*, says Tertullian. *Jussus a quolibet christiano, spiritus ille tam se dæmonem confitebitur de vero quam alibi Deum de falso.*[2] And St. Cyprian: *Oh! si audire eos velles et videre quomodo a nobis adjurantur et torquentur!*[3] If we wished to multiply texts, there is scarcely a Father who could not be cited.

[1] Matth., viii, 28; ix, 33; xii, 22; xvii, 14; Marc., xvi, 17; Luc., iv, 31; xii, 11; Act., xvii, 16; xix, 11, etc.
[2] Tert. *Apolog.*, xxiii. Cf. *ad Scapul.*
[3] St. Cyp., *Lib. ad Demetr.*

3. The belief of the Church cannot be called in doubt. Her prayers, adjurations, blessings on all things that are to serve for religious purposes, show that she is convinced that God has left to the devil a certain power over creatures, and that the evil spirit seeks to exercise this power over man.[1] As for possessions properly so called, the Order of Exorcist as the Church confers it on her ministers, and the formulas that she uses in the Ritual, show that she takes seriously the words of Our Savior: *Daemones ejicite.* She would be deceiving both the world and herself if the power of exorcist were in vain or could not be exercised.

4. Finally, the examples of possessions that history furnishes are innumerable. We find them at all times, in all places; and, for a good number at least, their historical reality is as absolute as their preternatural character is undeniable. Let one read for example, what St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, says of the demoniac brought into his church to the tomb of St. Felix; what St. Gregory the Great

[1] For example, the blessing of water, the ceremonies of Baptism, etc.

wrote of St. Benedict.[1] and what Sulpicius Severus says he saw with his own eyes at the tomb of St. Martin. Or, if one wishes more recent facts, let him read the life of St. Bernard, that of St. John Gualbertus, those of M. de Queriolet, of Jean d'Aranthon, of Father Yvan, of St. Francis of Sales and even of the Curé of Ars. Even in the more recent *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* one will find facts of this kind as astonishing and well authenticated as those mentioned by ancient ecclesiastical writers.[2] After all, is it astonishing that a being superior to man by nature, should sometimes

[1] Quidam Aquinensis ecclesiæ clericus, a dæmonio vexatus, ductus est ad Dei famulum Benedictum, qui Jesu Christo Domino preces fundens, antiquum hostem de obsesso homine protinus expulit. Cui sanato præcepit, dicens: "Vade et postea carnem non comedas, et ad sacrum ordinem nunquam accedere præsumas. Quacumque autem die sacrum ordinem temerare præsumpseris statim juri diaboli iterum mancipaberis." Discessit igitur sanus, et sicut terrere solet animum pœna recens, ea quæ vir Dei præceperat, custodivit. Cum vero post annos multos omnes minores suos sibimet superponi in sacris ordinibus cerneret, verba viri Dei quasi ex longo tempore oblitus, postposuit, atque ad sacrum ordinem accessit: quem mox is qui reliquerat diabolus tenuit, eumque vexare, quousque animam ejus excuteret, non cessavit. S. Greg. M., *Dial.* II, 19.

[2] See November, 1867, p. 296. P. de Bonniot, *les Possédés de Verzegnis*, 1880.

subject him to his dominion, or that God, who is to give up the accursed to the devil for all eternity submits some sinners to him temporarily in this present life? We know that when there is question of marvels, we must guard against credulity. But is the inclination which leads some souls to see prodigies everywhere a reason for denying all that seems strange and declaring impossible all facts which appear to be out of the ordinary course of things? Wisdom demands that we shun both extremes, and without wishing to justify or countenance any superstition, we believe we can say, with St. Thomas and Bossuet, that the tendency to reject the best proven diabolical facts, and, still more, the flat denial of their being even possible does not indicate a lively faith in the many analogous facts that are found in the Holy Scripture.[1]

[1] Exod., vii, etc. Tob., vi, viii. Job., ii. Matt. *supra* n. xxxiv. Cf. Bossuet. *II^e Serm., pour le 1^er Dim. de Carême*

XXXV.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE CAN THE DEVIL TAKE POSSESSION OF A MAN AND FOR WHAT MOTIVES CAN GOD ALLOW IT?

1. The main motive of the devil is to satisfy his hatred against man, by commencing to treat him in this world as he intends to treat him in the next, and by humiliating him by his tyranny, as much as Our Savior wished to elevate him by his grace. Moreover, Satan wishes, says Father De Bérulle,[1] to parody the Incarnation of the Word, by uniting himself to human nature, and appropriating to himself its faculties and operations.

2. We know only imperfectly the motives for which God can allow the devil thus to manifest his power and his malice; but, one of the most apparent is to make sensible the existence of the invisible world and the reality of the future life; to render more apparent, by the power of exorcisms, the divinity of the Church, the power of the sacraments and the prerogatives of His ministers and His saints.[2] Thus

[1] De Bérulle, *des Énergumènes.*
[2] Cf. Acts, xix, 14–16.

does He draw good from evil. He makes use of Satan himself to increase faith and to inspire us with a horror of sin, as well as respect for the priesthood and for the divine mysteries. It is, no doubt, for the same reason that he sometimes permits him to resist exorcism for so long a time.[1]

XXXVI.

WHAT ARE THE VIRTUES OF WHICH THE EXORCIST HAS THE MOST NEED?

There are four virtues that are of the highest importance for the exorcist:

1. Innocence of life.[2] An ecclesiastic careful to avoid all voluntary faults,[3] whose virtue has never succumbed under the attacks of the tempter or if he has fallen, has soon risen and resumed the combat with fresh strength will easily command the devil and make him obey; but what strength has he to oppose this wicked spirit and to impose on him

[1] Et manifestentur opera Dei in illo. JOAN., IX, 1–3.

[2] Debet habere spiritum mundum qui spiritibus imperat immundis, ut concordet vita cum officio. YVO CARN. *Serm. de Ord.*

[3] JOHN, XIV, 30.

his command,[1] who has made himself the slave of the devil and who is accustomed to follow his impulses?

2. Horror of Satan and of his works and consequently a great zeal to withdraw from his tyranny all Christians, whom the Son of God has honored by the gift of His grace, the communion of His Sacred Body and the presence of His Divine Spirit.[2]

3. A firm confidence in the Holy Name of Jesus, in the power of the cross, in the prayers of the Church, and in the use of Holy Water and other sacramentals.[3] It is by frequent invocation of the name of the Savior,[4] by frequently making the sign of the cross and applying to the possessed religious objects to which the Church has attached the fruit of her suffrages that ordinarily the infernal spirit is put to flight.

[1] Tunc enim recte in aliis dæmonibus imperabitis, cum prius in vobis eorum multimodam nequitiam superatis. PONTIF.

[2] Ut sint spirituales imperatores ad abigendos dæmones de corporibus obsessis, cum omni malitia multiformi. PONTIF.

[3] In nomine meo dæmonia ejicient. MARC., XVI, 17.

[4] Deus dedit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen, ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, cœlestium, terrestrium et infernorum. PHIL., II, 10.

4. A deep and sincere humility. No disposition is more opposed to the character of Satan, inspires him with more aversion and is more unbearable to him.[1] These virtues are indispensable to the exorcist for the successful exercise of his functions, and it is to be desired that he possess them in the highest degree. Whilst the devils tremble at the approach of Our Lord and are bound to obey His orders we see them in the Gospel resist His disciples and brave their threats. And when the latter ask the Master the reason of this difference, He answers that they are still too imperfect, that they have not enough faith, that there are devils who can be cast out only by prayers and mortifications.[2]

It does not follow that saints alone can cast out devils, nor that the exorcisms of an imperfect minister are always without result; for Our Lord assures

[1] Humilitatem nostram inimicus non sustinet. S. Bern. *Serm.* III *in Dedic.* "The mere name of the humble Vincent de Paul was enough to deliver a demoniac." Abelly, *Life of Saint Vincent de Paul.*

[2] Matth., xvii, 14–19. Cf. Act., xix, 14–16. Experto credo: pertimescit satanas piorum vigilias, orationes, jejunia, voluntariam paupertatem, maxime vero ardentem amorem erga Christum Deum, cujus unico crucis signo debilitatus aufugit. S. Athan., *Vita S. Anton.*

us that we shall see, on the last day, some among the reprobates who have cast out devils without being in His grace.[1]

XXXVII.

DOES THE ORDER OF EXORCIST PREPARE ONE FOR THE PRIESTHOOD AND HELP TO MAKE ONE A HOLY PRIEST?

The Order of Exorcist certainly prepares one for the priesthood, and this is evident for two reasons:

1. When there is need to exorcise, to cast out a devil, is it not ordinarily to a priest that the faithful have recourse and that the Bishop gives this mission? Priests ought then to possess in an eminent degree the grace and virtues of the exorcist.

2. If priests have rarely to cast out devils from the bodies, it is their duty and their work daily to free or preserve souls from his tyranny.[2] For there

[1] Multi dicent mihi in illa die: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo dæmonia ejecimus? Et tunc confitebor illis quoniam numquam novi vos. MATTH., VII, 22, 23.

[2] Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum, contra spritualia nequitiæ in cœlestibus. EPH., VI, 12.

is a striking analogy between these two ministries. The grace and virtues that are required for one evidently dispose an ecclesiastic for the other. Could he who would have zeal to repress the outward action of Satan over the body, fail to fight the influence which the fallen angel can exercise invisibly on the soul?

XXXVIII.

WHENCE COMES IT THAT EXORCISTS HAVE SO RARELY TO EXERCISE THEIR POWER OF CASTING OUT DEVILS AND THAT THEY HAVE TO FULFIL ONLY FUNCTIONS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE?

1. As possessions, properly so-called, have become rare in the Church, and as solemn exorcisms performed without necessity or discretion, would be objectionable, Bishops have for a long time reserved to themselves the determination of cases when these exorcisms shall take place and the choice of the ministers who shall perform them.[1] Now, they naturally choose these ministers from among those whose

[1] There are some exorcisms regularly exercised by the priest *ex officio*, for example, in Baptism, etc.

age, knowledge and virtue inspire them with most confidence. We should not be astonished, then, if they ordinarily prefer to young ecclesiastics who are not yet in Sacred Orders, priests of tried experience and sanctity. But when a priest, or even a Bishop, imposes hands on a demoniac it is as an exorcist that he acts. The power that he exercises does not differ from that which he received in Minor Orders. It might happen indeed that one in Minor Orders would offer the same guarantee as a priest and that he would inspire the same confidence. Most likely should a Bishop know a simple Exorcist with all the desirable qualities, humble, fervent, zealous, full of confidence in the merits of Christ and the prayers of His Church, he would willingly employ him on such an occasion. Perhaps he would even prefer him to a priest of equal merit, in order to confound the pride of Satan and inflict a deeper humiliation on him.

We speak here, of course, of solemn exorcisms, made according to official forms indicated in the Ritual. These are the only ones for which the permission of the Bishop is required. Private adjurations, such as the first Christians used to practice,

have never been forbidden to anyone, nor subjected to any formula. Made by an Exorcist, they would be a function of his Order and in spite of the want of solemnity they would derive their efficacy from the power conferred on him in his ordination.[1]

2. All the secondary functions attributed to the exorcist are related to this principal office—are, as it were, its dependencies. Thus to him is entrusted the care of the holy water; he has to fill the holy water fonts; see that they be always clean, and accompany the priest at the ceremony of the *asperges*. It is also his duty to make the responses when the priest administers Baptism, present the salt, etc.[2]

[1] Vexatos a dæmone exercitaturus ea qua par est pietate præditus esse debet, qui non sua sed aliena fretus virtute ac omni rerum humanarum cupiditate alienus, tam pium opus ex caritate constanter et humiliter exequatur. Rit. Rom.

[2] Natal. Alex., *De sac. ord.*, iv, 3.

CHAPTER V.

THE ACOLYTE.

XXXIX.

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF ACOLYTE AND HOW IS IT CONFERRED?

1. It is an Order which, while conferring the right of preparing the altar and presenting to the celebrant the materials for the Divine Sacrifice, imparts a special grace for the worthy performance of these holy functions.[1]

This Order, unlike the preceding, is exercised within the sanctuary. The Acolyte ministers immediately to the Subdeacon. As his name, ἀχόλουθος *pedissequus*, implies, he walks behind the sacred ministers and departs not from them. It is his privilege to serve the priest at Low Mass.

[1] Ut ad accendendum lumen et ad suggerendum vinum et aquam ad conficiendum sanguinem Christi Filii tui in offerenda Eucharistia, sanctis altaribus tuis fideliter subministrent. PONTIF.

II. The Order of Acolyte has a twofold matter and a twofold form. First the Bishop has the ordinand touch a candlestick and candle, saying to him the while, "*Receive the candlestick with the candle and know that you are bound to the lighting of the lights of the church, in the name of the Lord.*" Then he makes him place his hand on an empty cruet, at the same time addressing him thus, "*Receive the cruet for ministering wine and water for the Eucharist of the Blood of Christ, in the name of the Lord.*"

XL.

WHAT DO THE ORDINATION AND THE OFFICE OF THE ACOLYTE TYPIFY?

1. The rite of this ordination betokens the consecration and interior sanctification of the new Acolyte.

2. In performing his principal function the Acolyte repeats to the people in a more material manner, by way of symbolism, what Our Lord said to His disciples: "I am the light of the world: he that

followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[1]

At the same time he shows that he is associated with the dignity of Our Savior as the light of souls, and charged to enlighten the faithful by word and example. He in addition is a testimony to all Christians that they are one day to shine with the brightness of glory, and be resplendent with the brilliancy of the saints.

XLI.

WHAT VIRTUES ARE REQUIRED IN THE ACOLYTE?

The Church mentions three in particular:

1. *Purity.* The functions of the Acolyte at the altar demand this virtue,[2] and the white surplice which he wears in their exercise is to remind him of this fact.[3]

[1] 1. JOAN., VIII, 12. Hoc officium Dominus se habere testatur in evangelio, dicens: Ego sum lux mundi. YVO CARN. *Serm. de ord.*—JOAN., XII, 26, si quis mihi ministrat, me sequatur, ἐμοὶ ἀχολουθείτω.

[2] Mundamini, qui fertis vasa Domini, Is., LII, 11. Tunc etenim in Dei sacrificio digne vinum suggeretis et aquam, si vos ipsi Deo sacrificium per castam vitam et bona opera oblati fueritis. PONTIF.

[3] Superpelliceum propter sui candorem munditiam seu puritatem carnis designat. DURAND. *De div. off.* III, 1.

2. *Devotion to the Holy Sacrifice.* He should give proof of this by his zeal in serving the priest at ordinary Masses, and by his affection, recollection and piety in the performance of his duties at Solemn Masses.[1]

3. *Earnest endeavor to edify the Faithful.* His obligations on this head are indicated to him by the lighted candle which is placed in his hand at ordination. It is a way of making him understand, as the Bishop explains, that he is to show his brethren the road to heaven, walk at the head of the faithful, and illumine the Church by the light of his example and the splendor of his virtues.[2]

XLII.

WHICH IS THE MORE HONORABLE—TO SERVE AT THE ALTAR AS ACOLYTE, OR TO EXPEL THE EVIL SPIRIT AS EXORCIST?

The Church judges the Acolyte to be the greater; and if we consult faith, alone worthy of being heard

[1] Ut in offerenda eucharistia sancta altaribus tuis fideliter subministrent. PONTIF.

[2] Estote ergo solliciti in omni justitia, bonitate et veritate, ut et vos et alios et Dei Ecclesiam illuminetis. PONTIF.

on this question, we will not be surprised. The office of server of the Holy Sacrifice merits in the highest degree our esteem and respect.

1. In the first place, what function is there that is more exalted?

If it be true that the Mystery of the Incarnation is invisibly renewed upon the altar and that the priest bringing forth the Son of God under the form of the Eucharistic Species represents the Blessed Virgin bringing Him forth into our mortal condition, does not the office of server recall the office which the Angel Gabriel filled at Nazareth[1] and that which was entrusted to St. Joseph over the Word Made Flesh during the latter's entire childhood? The server at the altar represents the whole Church: he acts as its representative, and every word that he utters is in its name. Humble as this office may be in the eyes of the world, he may rest assured that it is far above his merits and that there is not an angel in heaven but envies him his lot;[2] for the

[1] Unus e septem, qui in conspectu throni ejus sunt, Tob., xii, 15. Apoc., 1.

[2] Ministrare sacro est opus Angelorum, quia cum eis servitur regi ac Domino omnium. S. Bonav. *De Inf. Novit*, iv. Examples of servers replaced by Angels: *Life of*

saints assure us that these happy spirits hold themselves highly honored, I do not say to coöperate actively in the Holy Sacrifice as the Acolyte, but merely to be present when it is celebrated; and according to St. Chrysostom a priest never celebrates without their gathering in hosts about him, and surrounding him with their adoration and love.[1]

2. Secondly, what office is more sanctifying and meritorious? After the priest who consecrates and receives the Divine Victim, who is to have a greater share in the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice than the server? Since he is in such close proximity to the Sacred Mysteries, it is but natural that he be more moved by them and that the Divine Host consequently

St. Oswald, Bishop of Vergon, 15 Oct., *Life of B. John of Parma,* 7th General of the Franciscans, 20 March; *Annales Frat. Min.* t. II, book I; *Life of the B. Daniel, of the Order of Premonstratentians. Life of S. Francis of Paula,* 1, 15, novice in a convent of Friars Minor. His duty was to serve Masses and wait at table in the refectory. Often he was present in both places at the same time and sometimes was raised to an ecstasy during the Holy Sacrifice.

[1] Per id tempus et Angeli astant, et locus altari proximus angelorum choris plenus est. *De sacerd.* VI, 3. Utinam nobis quoque adolentibus altaria, sacrificium offerentibus assistat angelus, imo præbeat se videndum! Non enim dubites assistere Angelum quando Christus immolatur. S. AMB., *In Luc.,* I, 28. Jube haec perferri per manus sancti angeli tui in sublime altare tuum. *Orat. Miss.*

operate in him with more virtue.[1] Furthermore, nothing is more edifying to the faithful than to see the priest served at the altar with attention, piety, modesty and devotion. A careless server, who is but little recollected, is a source of distraction to those assisting at Mass and destroys their pious feelings; whereas one that is pious, recollected and fervent, leads them to recollection and prayer.[2]

It is, then, profitable, as well as honorable, to serve at Mass; and when occasion to do so is offered, it is a real duty for the Acolyte to seize upon it. He should not yield this office to a layman, or even to a simple cleric, without sincere regret.

[1] Si constituamus hominem ministrantem sacrificio Missæ, cui sacerdos intentione sua speciali nullum fructum applicet, pie ac probabiliter credimus eum consequi proprium suum fructum ex opere operato. Sic recte exponuntur verba canonis: Pro quibus tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt: et rationi consentaneum est ut omnes qui ad oblationem vere concurrunt, per proprium actum participent fructum hujus oblationis. SUAREZ, In p. 3. S. Thom., q. 83, disp. 79, sect. 8.

[2] While the sacristans of a parish of considerable size in Southern France lay ill in 1841, the curates agreed to serve each other's Mass, and they did so daily for more than a month. It was remarked that the number of the faithful in attendance at Mass was notably augmented. Several, moved by such an example of religion and charity, resumed their religious practices.

In addition, let us see how the holiest priests have rejoiced and felt highly honored to perform this office. St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, those great Masters of Theology, made of it a daily practice, and from their own lips we learn that this devotion was to them the source of the most abundant graces. St. Vincent de Paul is another example. "Even at the age of sixty-five years and over," says his biographer, "often this first Superior of the Mission despite the burdens and infirmities with which he was laden, acted as server; and when a cleric was wanting he gave the responses at the altar to any priest who happened to need him, with such respect and devotion that all who beheld him were deeply touched."[1] Père Eudes likewise regarded as a piece of good fortune every occasion offered him of performing this religious act. He would first put on a surplice, which is, as he would say, the nuptial garment required for the banquet of the King of Kings; often he said on his knees the "*Indue me.*" During the Holy Sacrifice, far from exempting himself from even the least details of the ceremonial, he attentively observed every one.

[1] Abelly.

And, not content with affording his missionaries such an example, he furthermore strongly recommended them to teach the children they should come in contact with while preaching, the manner of serving at Mass as well as the interior dispositions required by this holy function.[1]

XLIII.

WHAT MUST BE DONE BY A CLERIC WHO IS ANXIOUS TO SERVE MASS IN A HOLY AND EDIFYING MANNER?

First he must carefully learn the responses, the necessary ceremonies and what are the dispositions proper to the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.

During Mass the principal points to be observed are:

1. He must do all that the rubrics require, omitting nothing through either negligence or human respect.[2]

2. With mind and heart he must enter into the

[1] De Hérambourg, *Le P. Eudes, Ses vertus*, XVI.

[2] Peccaret cærimonias leviter omittendo vel negligenter aut irreverenter tractando. SUAREZ, In p. 3. S. Th., q. 83, desp. 87, sect. 2.

spirit of the ceremonies performed, for example, humbling himself when he genuflects or inclines his head, repenting and reproaching himself when he strikes his breast.[1]

3. He should join in all the sentiments of the priest as expressed by word or act. Thus, at the "*Kyrie*" bewailing the miseries and needs of the Church, reanimating his fervor at each Oration, at the Offertory,[2] at the *Pater Noster*, at the *Agnus Dei*, etc. The better to succeed in this practice, it would be well to give up all reading and vocal prayer while serving.

4. He should afford the faithful an example of the most perfect deportment and the most edifying modesty.[3]

From the Consecration to the Communion, that

[1] Sane clericus devotus ac prudens, dum Missæ divinæ assistit, nihil cogitat nisi Christum Jesum et hunc crucifixum. Ponit ante oculos cordis sui humilitatem et patientiam, angustias et dolores Christi; opprobria, sputa, mortem devote et sollicite recolit, et se in ipsa memoria dominicæ passionis crucifigit. PET. Bles. *Serm.*

[2] Dicitur in Missis quotidie: *Sursum corda,* et tales quotidie Domino mentiuntur respondentes: *Habemus ad Dominum.*

[3] Clericus qui Missæ sacrificio ministrat, dum eam fonctionem obit, ne preces horarias, neve aliud quidpiam de libro recitet, sed toto intimæ pietatis studio ad ministerium attentus sit. CONC. MILEV. VI, *De Miss.*

is, while Our Lord is upon the altar, let the reality of His Presence sink deeply into the heart of the server and make him act as if he saw Jesus stretched upon the Cross on Calvary, and unite with Him in the homage He renders to the Father in His own name and in ours.

By habituating yourself to the observance of these rules you will be sure to have a large share in the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice and will dispose yourself to fulfil worthily the functions of the sub-diaconate and diaconate.[1]

XLIV.

WHY ARE ECCLESIASTICS AND ACOLYTES MORE THAN SIMPLE CLERICS, BOUND TO LEAD EXEMPLARY LIVES?

Here are a few reasons which can not be too often meditated upon:

1. *The high position which they occupy in the Church.* It is a self-evident fact that in all societies

[1] Tantus S. Eduardi fuit in Christo amor et fides, ut illum aliquando inter Missarum solemnia videre meruerit blando vultu et divina luce fulgentem. BREV., 13 *Oct.* lect. 4.

inferiors are led to shape their own conduct after that of their superiors. "This disposition," says St. Chrysostom, "is but natural."[1]

This suffices to impose upon ecclesiastics the obligation of leading exemplary and eminently Christian lives. Placed at the head of the faithful and therefore bound to lead them to lives of virtue, they would be manifestly wanting in faithfulness to duty if, instead of being models of perfection and fervor, they were to set an example of laxity, self-indulgence, and negligence in the service of God.

2. *Our Lord's Will.* Our Divine Master, speaking to those whom He had chosen to continue after His departure His work in His Church, said, "You are the light of the world. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel; but upon a candlestick that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven!" (MATT. v, 14.) Could He have made more emphatic the obligation under which they are of edifying their brethren by the splendor of their virtues? But ecclesiastics, sharing in the vocation of these

[1] S. CHRYS. *De Sacerd.*, III, 14.

first disciples of Our Savior, participate necessarily in their obligations also. This is what the bishop alludes to when he addresses to the acolytes, at their ordination, these recommendations of Our Lord and begs God to make them faithful.[1]

3. *The teaching of the Apostles, our forefathers in the faith and our models in the exercise of the Holy ministry of Our Lord.* They vie with one another in proclaiming the importance of good example and the obligation under which we are placed of edifying the faithful by the practice of virtue. Everyone knows with what insistence St. Peter urged upon pastors the necessity of being models to their flocks,[2] and what St. Paul says to all the ministers of the Church in the person of Timothy: "Be thou an example to the faithful on every occasion and in all things."[3]

4. *The Tradition of the Fathers and the Doctors.* All those who have dealt with the duties of the clergy place in the foremost rank their obligation of edify-

[1] Quatenus lumen visibile manibus præferentes, lumen quoque spirituale moribus præbeant. PONTIF. *De Acol.*

[2] Forma facti gregis ex animo. I PET., v, 3.

[3] Exemplum esto fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in caritate, in fide, in castitate. I TIM., IV, 12.

ing the Church by saintly example. St. Chrysostom desired the priest to be the living law,[1] or sanctity in practice. St. Bernard demands that ecclesiastics be shining examples of every virtue that they preach to the faithful. "Nothing is more deplorable," says he, "than the contrary example. For faults become the more glaring in proportion to the rank of the offender. How could the fall of an edifice built on an eminence, or the smoke from the extinguishing of a candle placed on a candelabra, fail to be observed?"[2] He returned so often to this point that he called it his "refrain."

5. *The authority of the Council of Trent.* Its words are remarkable. "Nothing is more efficacious in bringing the faithful to the service of God and lives of piety than the example afforded by the fervent lives of those consecrated to the Lord. Therefore, clerics who have at heart correspondence to their vocation should endeavor to so regulate their lives

[1] Animata lex et regula bene vivendi. *In I Tim.* v. Cf. S. Bern., *De Consid.* II, VII, 4 et III, cap. ult.

[2] Et nunc audi canticum meum, et quidem minus suave, sed salutare: Monstruosa res gradus summus et animus infimus, sedes prima et vita ima, lingua magniloqua et manus otiosa, sermo multus et fructus nullus. *Ibid.* II, VII, 14.

that there appear in their dress, their demeanor and their speech, nothing but what breathes of seriousness, reserve and sanctity. Finally, their vigilance in avoiding even the slightest defects and their constancy in giving good example should be of such a degree as to obtain for them universal esteem and veneration."

6. "To these authorities," says M. de Lantages, "may be subjoined the following reasoning. Either you have or you have not ability as a speaker. If you possess such ability then you must use your best efforts to make it bear fruit: for God will demand of you an accounting. But remember, to avoid sterility, preaching must be reinforced by an exemplary life and the spirit of prayer. If for one reason or another you are not gifted with fluency and power of speech, you are bound to supply for its absence, and to do so you have but one means—the edifying example of a holy life—an infallible means.[1] The practice of virtue, the giving of an

[1] Quicumque voluerit proximorum animabus utilis esse, prius debet in seipso habere quidquid alios est docturus; alioquin parum proficiet. S. Vinc. Ferr. *De vit. spirit.* Præf.

example of perfection, is the best kind of preaching, the most touching and most effective of all sermons, one preferred above all others by St. Francis de Sales. The Council of Trent observes that the effect of such a sermon is constant and continuous: *Est continuum prædicandi genus.* Therefore, whether you are a good preacher or not, your strictest obligation and foremost duty towards the faithful is to show them what virtue is by your own practice of it, and to edify them by a saintly life.[1]

7. *Let us conclude by this consideration.* Even though the preceding arguments and authorities were lacking, should not the reverence due your sacred character be a sufficient incentive to make you resolve to show your esteem for it by leading an exemplary life? Could an ecclesiastic with a sense of the dignity of his calling, see its character so often defiled and debased by unbecoming conduct, without feeling the need of raising it up by the exercise of true virtue, without resolving to restore to it, by the influence of his own good example, the

[1] Validior operis quam oris vox. S. Bern., *In cant.* lix. Nihil opus esset verbis, si vita nostra sanctitatis luce fulgeret S. Chrys. *In Matth.* Hom. xv.

position of honor and veneration which it should occupy in the eyes of the faithful?[1]

XLV.

WHAT MUST AN ACOLYTE DO TO FULFIL HIS OBLIGATION OF GIVING EDIFICATION TO THE FAITHFUL?

1. He must strive to be irreproachable and exemplary in his every action; for a single shortcoming would be sufficient to cast suspicion upon, and render valueless, the best qualities and the holiest works.[2] However, he will do well to apply himself more energetically to those duties which he sees most neglected around him and the neglect of which is a source of scandal to the faithful. Thus, in a locality where the idleness and worldliness of the clergy is a source

[1] Decet actuum operumque nostrorum testem esse publicam æstimationem, ne derogetur muneri, ut qui videt ministrum altaris congruis ornatum virtutibus, auctorem prædicet et Dominun veneretur qui tales servulos habet. S. Amb., *De off. min.* III, 50.

[2] Oportet episcopum esse irreprehensibilem. I Tim., III. Verbum sanum, irreprehensibile. Tit., II, 8. Hoc unico verbo genus omne virtutum expressit. S. Chrys. *Homil.* X *in I Tim.*

of reproach, let him lead an industrious and austere life, observing rigidly, as did St. Charles, the rules of sobriety and mortification. Let him show a spirit of entire detachment, to offset the bad example of priests who are not sufficiently disinterested. To the same end let him strive to be ever humble, recollected, charitable, etc.[1]

2. He must form the habit of exterior modesty. Modesty above all else is the source of edification. An air of composure, humility of expression, piety and gentleness of manner, betoken that the presence of God is felt under the guidance of His Spirit; and such a sight inspires recollection and devotion. Is it not an influence of this kind that the images of the saints wholly inanimate though they be, exert? To be in the presence of one is enough to attract us to zeal, humility, prayer and kindness. An ecclesiastic who possesses true modesty is an inspiration to holiness, a living image which is the more forceful and impressive in that it combines reality with

[1] Tales convenit esse Dei cultores et servos, mansuetos, graves, prudentes, pios, irreprehensibiles, intactos, immaculatos, ut quisquis eos viderit, admiretur, stupeat et dicat: Vere homines sunt Dei, quorum talis est conversatio. Apud. S. Aug., *De vit. Christ.*, IX.

appearances.[1] "The servants of God," says St. Vincent de Paul, "have even external qualities that distinguish them; and I can never look upon such persons so full of God, without being moved. This is, no doubt, the reason why painters when depicting a saint represent his head as surrounded with a crown of rays; those who lead lives of holiness and justice exercise upon their neighbors a certain influence and exhibit a certain splendor which is peculiar to them alone."

3. He must be punctual in hearing Mass every day and set an example of veneration for and devotion to the Holy Sacrifice. On this point certain of the faithful and some humble religious furnish us with a model. How many there were during the Reign of Terror in the last century who risked their fortunes and lives that they might assist at the Divine Mysteries and partake at the Holy Table! In 1848, a missionary was conducting to China a number of Sisters of Charity who were going thither

[1] Nemo unquam Martinum vidit iratum; nemo moerentem, nemo ridentem, idem unusque semper cœlestem lætitiam vultus præferens. Numquam in illius ore nisi Christus; numquam in illius corde nisi pietas, nisi pax, nisi misericordia inerat. Sulpit. Sever. *Dial* 1. *De S. Mart.*

to spend the rest of their days. We are told that the Superioress, Mother Durant, was unceasing in her supplications to Heaven that they might have fair weather for their voyage. "Then you fear to die at sea?" questioned the missionary. "Oh! no, Father," responded this holy woman; "I pray for fair weather that we may be able to have Mass every day and receive daily Communion."[1]

XLVI.

IS THE EXERCISE OF THE DUTIES OF ACOLYTE AND THE CONSEQUENT PROFITING BY ITS GRACES A PREPARATION FOR THE PRIESTHOOD?

If the acolyte performs his duties fittingly and well, serving Mass faithfully, piously presenting the wine and water, bearing the candle at the head of processions with the sentiments demanded by this office, then there can be no doubt but that he is preparing for the exercise of the holy ministry and making his apprenticeship for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. And if, in addition, he is con-

[1] *Annales de l'Arche d'Alliance.*

stantly recollected and modest, faithful in his good example, he is surely acquiring and developing little by little the two most essential requisites of a good priest—a burning zeal for the honor and glory of God and the fixed habit of edifying the faithful by the practice of virtue.[1]

The life of Father Yvan, founder of the Religious of Mercy in the seventeenth century, furnishes a wonderful example of a holy priest who during his whole life was faithful to the virtues of the acolyte, especially in his devotion to the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

His heart appeared ever drawn toward the tabernacle. He passed a great part of his days in the chapel, and in old age seldom quitted it. In his youth his greatest joy had been to serve Mass and decorate the altars, and it remained so until his last breath. The duties of sacristan and chorister were welcomed by him with delight. A strange priest coming to his monastery to say Mass never lacked a server. God rewarded his fervor by many extraordinary favors. A clergyman attests having seen

[1] Qui bene ministraverint in minoribus ordinibus, gradum bonum sibi acquirent, ut fiant sacerdotes. Hug. Card., *In I Tim.*, III.

him several times in the church transfigured and emitting wonderful beams of light from his person. One day as he was giving an instruction on the Eucharist a sort of a cloud came from the tabernacle, rested upon his head a moment, then returned to the tabernacle. His hearers were filled with wonder, but this holy priest seized upon the event to make more fervent and lively their faith in the Real Presence.

Theodore Ratisbon had the happiness to forsake all his worldly advantages to become a religious. A short while afterwards, in response to the call of grace, he decided to enter the priesthood, and in the month of October, 1828, he received Minor Orders. Nothing could have been more touching than the joy and gratitude which he evinced on this occasion; "How happy am I! The royal mantle itself would appear but tatters, but a ragged coat, beside my mantle of white!"

XLVII.

AFTER WE HAVE RECEIVED MINOR ORDERS WHAT ARE THE DUTIES THAT SHOULD CLAIM OUR ATTENTION?

Three things above all else should claim our attention:

1. We should nourish in our hearts a lively gratitude for God's goodness; for the reception of Orders has introduced us not into the service of a mere earthly prince, but into that of the King of Heaven, the Word made Flesh, who is ever present in the bosom of His Church in the Sacrament of His love. And in proportion to the dignity to which one has been raised by Minor Orders, and to the greatness of the duties he has assumed, are the graces and supernatural gifts with which he is overwhelmed. Hence he is doubly bound to give thanks to God, and endeavor to do His will in all things.[1]

2. We should eagerly embrace every occasion which offers of performing the duties and functions

[1] In mente habe qualiter acceperis et audieris, et serva. Apoc., III, 3. Gratias Deo super inenarrabili dono ejus I Cor., IX, 15. Nolite contristare Spiritum sanctum Domini, in quo signati estis. Eph., IV, 30.

of Minor Orders.[1] Far from shunning the humblest duties, let us rather prefer them and perform them with great love—for it is a means of edifying the faithful and of drawing down upon ourselves the blessings of heaven: *Minoratus minoretur.* This is the mark of all saintly ecclesiastics. "Throughout my whole life I ever sought the lowest place," said St. Francis de Sales, "I would, if such were the will of God, carry holy water, as a simple cleric and labor for the salvation of the poor rather than carry the crozier in my hand and wear the mitre upon my head."[2]

3. We can not meditate too often upon sacred Orders nor prepare too well for their reception; for our whole life is not to be spent in the office of Acolyte to which we have been raised.[3] Those in Minor Orders, since they are on the eve of Subdeaconship, are very near the time when they will ascend the

[1] Dicite Archippo: Vide ministerium quod accepisti, ut illud impleas. Col., iv, 17.

[2] Life of the Saint by De Cambis.

[3] Minores ordines adepti ita de gradu in gradum ascendant ut in eis cum ætate vitæ meritum et doctrina major accrescat. Conc. Trid. Sess. xxiii, 2. Subdiaconi ordinentur in ordinibus minoribus jam probati, ac litteris et iis quæ ad ordinem exercendum pertinent, instructi. *Ibid.* 13.

altar and touch the vessels of sacrifice. There is no more powerful consideration to lead them to profit by the graces received with Minor Orders and advance rapidly in ecclesiastical and sacerdotal virtues.

XLVIII.

CAN HE WHO HAS RECEIVED MINOR ORDERS RETURN TO THE LAY STATE?

He may, and in two ways:

1. *Freely*, of his own choice. This happens from time to time. There are a certain number who withdraw at the approach of Subdeaconship, the obligations of which cause them to hesitate. But on this point there are two remarks to be made: the first is that to withdraw without imprudence or reproach, one must be certain that there is no call to the ecclesiastical life and that discontinuance is the will of God.[1] The second is that he does not cease, on returning to the lay state, to possess the powers of the ordinations received; and that the graces in

[1] Demas me reliquit, diligens hoc sæculum. II Tim., iv, 10.

which he has participated are, according to many theologians, sacramental graces. But whether or not he has received the Sacrament of Orders, one who has been raised to such a dignity is under a special obligation to live a good Christian life, to serve God regardless of human respect, to be a devoted son of the Church and a source of edification to his brethren.

2. *By way of punishment*, in virtue of a decision or decree of ecclesiastical authority. When one in Minor Orders brings reproach upon his state by his conduct or falls into some grave fault, he is liable to be dismissed or even degraded.[1]

By dismissal all ecclesiastical rights, privileges and favors acquired by ordination are lost. This punishment is perpetual in its kind. Degradation adds to the punishment of dismissal that of public dishonor. It is inflicted only in very grave cases and where the evidence has been submitted to a court; the ceremonial used in this instance may be found in the Pontifical.

Ecclesiastics raised to sacred Orders are likewise

[1] Satagite ut per bona opera certam vestram vocationem et electionem faciatis. II PET., I, 10.

subject to these punishments. Those thus degraded or deposed are not by that reason freed from the obligation of chastity and the office.[1]

[1] Etsi irreprehensibilis videatur ingressus, nihilne ultra timendum? Timendum et maxime. Neque enim quicumque spiritu cœperint etiam spiritu consummantur, sed carne nonnulli. Et Saul princeps constitutus est a Domino, et Judas non ab alio electus. Oper. S. Bern. *Colloq. Simon,* 14.

PART II.
MEDITATIONS ON MINOR ORDERS.

SECTION I.

HOLY ORDERS, AND MINOR ORDERS IN PARTICULAR.

MEDITATION I.

THE POWERS LEFT BY OUR LORD TO HIS MINISTERS.

First Point. Picture to yourself Our risen Savior on the point of ascending into Heaven; His Apostles are gathered about Him to receive His last commands. Already He has told them that He is transferring to them the mission which the Father gave into His hands and that His work is to become theirs. (John, xx, 21.) Now He places at the service of their ministry His omnipotence, promising to make all their acts valid: *Data est mihi omnis potestas in cœlo et in terra: euntes ergo docete omnes gentes.* (Matt. xxviii, 18.) Just as if He were to say to them, "Be not appalled at the magnitude of your undertaking: remember that you are the ministers of a glorified and all-powerful

Man-God. Whenever you act according to your commission and in My name for the service of My Father, you will not act alone, for I shall join my action to yours and supply for your weakness. As I baptized by your hands when you gave My baptism on the banks of the Jordan, so I shall continue to baptize, to bless, to consecrate, to absolve and to preach, with you and through you. You will seem to do everything alone, but in reality it will be I who shall give to your works their efficacy." *Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem sæculi.* Our Lord pledges his aid *for all time*, because He sees in His Apostles all those who shall succeed them and be associated in their ministry. Bless Him for what He did for you and His whole clergy by this act. Insignificant as you may be in the Church, yet, if you have been called to His priesthood, you were specially present to His mind at that moment. He knew what you would be called upon to do for His service, and He destined for you all the powers and helps that you could desire in order to conform to His designs.

Second Point. The better to appreciate the powers which Our Savior bequeathed to His ministers

and wished you to share, consider their end, their extent and their effects.

1. Their end is wholly heavenly: They have not for their direct object temporal advantages and earthly happiness, as have secular powers, but life eternal, that is, union with God in this world and possession of Him in the next, the preparation of the elect upon earth and their supreme bliss in heaven. This is what the Father proposed in sending His Son upon earth and anointing Him a priest forever. *Ut omne quod dedit ei, det eis vitam æternam.* (JOAN. XVII, 3), the same that the Son intended in making the Apostles His ministers and making them share in His priesthood. *Et ipse dedit quosdam quidem apostolos, quosdam autem prophetas, alios vero pastores et doctores ad consummationem sanctorum, in opus ministerii in ædificationem corporis Christi.* (GAL., IV, 11.) Hence Orders are instituted for the salvation and sanctification of souls, *propter electos, ut et ipsi salutem consequantur* (II TIM. II,10.) Therefore these powers are wholly supernatural and heavenly, and every one that receives them can be called, like Jesus Himself, the minister of the Holy of Holies, the true Tabernacle of which all

earthly ones are but shadows and types. *Sanctorum minister et tabernaculi veri, quod fixit Deus et non homo.* (HEB., VIII, 2.)

2. Their extent, in a sense, is unlimited. It is true that each Order taken by itself has its own particular sphere of activity and its specified duties. *Unicuique sicut Deus divisit mensuram fidei.* (ROM., XII, 3.) One in Minor Orders has not the duties and prerogatives of the Subdeacon, nor the Subdeacon those of the Deacon, nor the latter those of the Priest; but the whole cycle of Orders is coextensive with the plenitude of the priesthood and embraces all the powers exercised by Our Savior as Priest. Whether taken singly or collectively, these powers are absolute and independent of time, person and place. He whom Our Savior shall make His minister shall in all places and at all times possess this dignity. In vain would any created power, no matter what it might be, attempt to rob him of his character, debase his dignity, or restrict his prerogatives; since this is a gift which God has bestowed forever, it can not be altered nor can it be lost.

3. As to their effects, they are altogether divine and far transcending the power of all created agents.

Nothing is more evident if you consider the principal orders, for instance the priesthood. Suppose an angel were to have the power of creating, and that out of nothing he were to bring forth a world like ours: could he do anything to be compared with what the priest does when he consecrates the Body and Blood of Our Savior and offers Him to the Eternal Father as a victim for man's salvation? What can a King do on behalf of his subjects which can be compared with what the priest does when he imparts to a soul the life of grace, or gives back to a sinner the friendship of God and his celestial heritage? *Non imperatorum, sed sacerdotum linguæ claves factæ sunt cœli.* (Hildeb.) And as the priesthood is divine in character, can we not to some extent at least, say the same of the other Orders, since all tend to the same end and contribute to the same result—the worship of God in a manner worthy of His majesty, and the raising of souls to participation in His life and everlasting bliss?

Third Point. Bless the Son of God for having deigned to call our humanity to share in the exercise of His priesthood. Not content with making us His members, animating us with His spirit, and

loading us with favors, He ordains us His ministers, His representatives, He makes us other Christs. He desires us to perform for His Father and for souls His own most wonderful deeds: and He sometimes even makes us do them more strikingly and with more evident results. *Nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus,* says the Psalmist, *nimis confortatus est principatus eorum.* (Ps. CXXXVIII, 17.) Thank this Divine Savior especially for having chosen you for such a ministry and having placed you among the princes of His people. As a return for such a privilege give to Him your whole soul, consecrate to His service all that you possess, your mind, your heart, your powers and your life. Beg Him to use freely all that you have for His own greater glory, and assure Him that you wish to be ever at His command till your last breath.

Meditate upon PSALM CXII *Laudate, pueri, Dominum.* It will inspire in you reverence for divine worship and zeal for the holy ministry. "To a wordling the world is everything and God nothing" says the Curé of Ars, "but to the man of faith illuminated by the light of heaven, God is all and the whole universe but absolute nothingness."

MEDITATION II.

NUMBER AND VARIETY OF ORDERS.

First Point. The founder of the hierarchy is Christ; and the Council of Trent has defined it as an article of faith that it, as well as the Church, is of Divine origin. Hence in the hierarchy as in the Church we find diversity, gradation, and subordination; or rather it is only in view of its hierarchy and clergy that the Apostle can truly say of the Church—that it is one body composed of many members, each having a certain office to fulfil and the graces proper to the same: that all labor at a common task and contribute to accomplish Our Savior's will, which is the development and sanctification of His Mystical Body: *Multi unum corpus sumus in Christo, habentes donationes secundum gratiam differentes . . . . unicuique sicut Deus divisit mensuram fidei.* (Rom., xii, 3–6.) *Ad consummationem sanctorum, in opus ministerii, in ædificationem corporis Christi.* (Eph. iv, 12.) Thank Our Lord for the care He has taken in wisely determining the organization of the Church, the principal rites of worship, and the powers of His Ministers. Adore in a spirit

of faith the ends which He proposes to Himself, and beg Him to enable you to enter into His spirit and conform to His views.

Second Point. Consider why Our Savior desires that there be a variety and hierarchy in Orders.

1. The first reason is *the interests of divine worship.* To be worthy of God and profitable to the faithful this worship must have a certain solemnity, speak both to the mind and the heart, and be calculated to arouse in souls holy sentiments and pious feelings. Now would these effects be forthcoming if there were but one Order of ministers and but one function to be performed? With the disappearance of the numerous officiating ministers and divers ceremonies there would in a great measure disappear also the imposing spectacle of the divine mysteries, their symbolical meanings—the vestiges of the old worship—the memories of Our Savior's history, the anticipations of the heavenly liturgy, the edifying expressions of charity, mutual respect, deference, and subordination, which the ministers of the sanctuary in their relations with one another place unceasingly before the eyes of the faithful. The services would be marked only by their coldness and

monotony, and it would be said of Catholics what is often said of Protestants, that they have but an abstract, formless religion, one incapable of appealing to the emotional faculties, and little in harmony with the sentiments of the majority of the human race.

2. The second reason is the *dignity of the priesthood.* What could better emphasize the grandeur and holiness of the priesthood than this succession of Orders, of each of which the candidate must show himself worthy and each of which he must pass through before he may attain to the sacerdotal state? The six lower Orders may be compared to the six steps of the royal throne of Solomon: *Sex gradus in quibus ascendebatur ad solium.* (II PAR., IV, 18.) Never have the faithful a more exalted idea of the priesthood, nor greater esteem for the dignity of the priest, than when they see him assisted and served at the altar by numerous ministers, representing the various grades of the hierarchy, everyone of whom is above the layman in dignity and authority. Such is the picture of the High Priest of the Old Law drawn by the Holy Ghost when He desires to emphasize his greatness and majesty. *Sacerdos*

magnus in ascensu altaris sancti gloriam dedit sanctitatis amictum. Circa illum corona fratrum: sicut plantatio cedri in monte Libano, sic coram illo steterunt omnes filii Aaron in gloria sua, amplificare oblationem excelsi regis. (Eccli., iv, 12–14.)

3. A third reason is *the spiritual profit of ecclesiastics.* Each successive ordination requires additional marks of worthiness in the candidates, whilst it also confers upon them additional graces. Thus each ordination supplies a twofold means for progress in virtue. Hence the seminary is a road whose end is perfection and along which divine grace makes them almost of necessity advance. *Per ordines quasi per cantica graduum proceditur ad sacerdotium.* (Pet. Bles.) *Atque ita de gradu in gradum ascendant, ut in eis cum ætate vitæ meritum et doctrina major accrescat.* (Conc. Trid.) The Divine Wisdom has not seen fit that the height of ecclesiastical grandeur and power be reached all at once, lest the peril should then be too great. Burdens are the more difficult to bear just in proportion as little preparation has been made for them, and the more suddenly we are crowned with glory the greater is the danger of self-complacency.

THIRD POINT. Thank the Divine Goodness for having brought into such accord His own Glory and our sanctification. Observe how admirable are the designs of Our Savior, whether He acts Himself or through His Church. *Attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter.* (SAP., VIII, 1.) Resolve to conform to all His designs concerning Holy Orders, to this end preparing with all possible care to receive them, performing their functions assiduously, striving to practice the virtues they require, and, finally, applying to your ecclesiastical formation and your ordinations the wise maxim of St. Francis de Sales: *sat cito, si sat bene.*

Recall to mind, or read in his life, what the holy bishop thought of Holy orders and of the manner of preparing for their reception.

MEDITATION III.

MEANING OF ORDERS.

FIRST POINT. Admire and bless the divine wisdom for having ever employed, in teaching us the truths of religion, the language best adapted to our nature and dispositions. From the very begin-

ning of the world the heavens published the glory of the Almighty, and all reasonable creatures could hear their voice. Under the Old Law the revealed doctrine was made more intelligible to the senses by the ritual institutions and ceremonies—numberless figures foreshadowing the marvels to be realised in later generations. When preaching the Gospel, Our Savior used to speak in parables, and His acts many times served to introduce or confirm His discourses. Such is likewise the practice of the Church. She loves to speak to the eye by her worship, her rites, her solemnities, her hierarchy; and in her sanctuaries just as in nature everything is full of meaning *Nihil est sine voce.* (I Cor., xiv, 10.) With the Church, with Our Savior, there is not one act that has not a certain signification, indicative of some plan or of some hidden operation: *Invisibilia enim ipsius per ea quæ facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur.* (Rom., i, 20.) Beg the Divine Master to enlighten your understanding that you may realise the meaning and signification of the Orders to which you are called.

Second Point. Holy Orders have a twofold meaning: they are at once a memorial of the life of the

Son of God upon earth with His disciples, and an image of His life among the elect and His angels in heaven.

1. What did Our Savior do during His sojourn upon earth? He prayed, He taught, He exhorted, He cast out demons and cleansed souls; He offered Himself up as a victim to vindicate His Father's justice; He filled souls with His spirit and His graces. Is this not what His ministers do today, and what Holy Orders empower them to accomplish? The priest celebrates the Divine Sacrifice, the deacon proclaims the Gospel, the subdeacon reads for the faithful the oracles of the Prophets and the instructions of the Apostles, the acolyte sheds on their souls the light of Faith and the fragrance of virtue, the exorcist expels demons, the lector recalls to the faithful the teachings of Divine Wisdom, the ostiary keeps away from the altars the worldly and unworthy. *Unusquisque sicut accepit gratiam illam administrantes.* (I Pet., iv, 10.) Thus the ministry of the Man-God is renewed among us, or rather perpetuated; for it must be said of all the sacraments and sacred functions what St. John said of Baptism. *Baptizabat Jesus, quamvis non baptizaret ipse, sed*

discipuli ejus. (IV, 2.) The functions are diverse, but the principal agent only one; and the effects of grace which Our Savior produces through His ministers are more multiplied, without being less wonderful, than those of which He Himself was the cause during His lifetime. *Divisiones ministrationum sunt, idem vero Dominus; et divisiones operationum sunt, idem vero Deus qui operatur omnia in omnibus.* (I COR., XII, 5, 6.)

2. What is Jesus doing in Heaven, and what will He do for all eternity? "He is there as our Head," says the Apostle, "to intercede for us before the face of God. *Ut appareat nunc vultui Dei pro nobis.* (HEB., IX, 24.) He is there as our victim, a noble victim, but one ever immolated. *Vidi in medio throni et seniorum Agnum stantem tanquam occisum.* (APOC., V, 6.) He adores the majesty of His Father in the name of all His members, He praises Him, blesses Him, and gives Him thanks for us. *Vidi et ecce Agnum supra montem Sion et cum eo centum quadraginta quator millia; et cantabant quasi canticum novum ante sedem.* (APOC. XIV, 1, 3.) Whilst adoring His Father with all His members He also with His Father receives the adoration of every creature.

Et cantabant dicentes: Dignus es, Domine, quoniam occisus es et redemisti nos in sanguine tuo, et fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum et sacerdotes. Et erat numerus eorum millia millium dicentium: Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est accipere virtutem et divinitatem, et honorem et gloriam et benedictionem. (v, 8–12.) Is this not the same spectacle which the Church affords here below to eyes of faith? Is it not this that we behold during the holy mysteries, that the ministers symbolize in the ceremonies? Yes; by means of the hierarchy and the functions of Holy Orders we see in our sanctuaries what St. John saw in heaven—a holy congregation of worshippers and suppliants, an altar, a victim ever immolated and ever living, the Lamb of God performing the office of Mediator—and to honor and represent this Mediator, a venerable pontiff surrounded by priests clothed in white robes bearing crowns and offering incense, symbol of the prayers of the saints. The difference lies in this, that whereas here below all that is supernatural and divine remains hidden beneath the veil of mystery, in heaven all is visible, shining in the full light of glory: *Nunc per speculum in ænigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem.* (I Cor., xiii, 12.) *Quoniam cum apparuerit, videbimus eum sicuti est.* (I Joan, iii, 2.)

THIRD POINT. Understand the excellence of Holy Orders and of what esteem they are worthy. How profitable is it for the Church to have constantly in her midst not only the person of the Man-God but also at the same time the substance of His mysteries, and to taste beforehand the joys which are the portion of His glorified members! What happiness for you that the duties which you have to perform were and are still those of the Son of God? For not only priests but also all the ministers of the Church can say with the Apostle, in the exercise of their functions, that they hold the place of Jesus Christ and represent Him here below: *Pro Christo legatione fungimur.* (II COR., v, 20.) What can we want and what is there left for us to desire other than to perfectly harmonize our lives and sentiments with our ministry, acquire the virtues which it demands and ever perform its functions solely for the glory of God and in the spirit of His Son. *Unusquisque, sicut accipit gratiam, illam administrantes. Si quis loquitur, quasi sermones Dei. Si quis ministrat tanquam ex virtute quam administrat Deus, ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus per Jesum Christum.* (I PET., IV, 10, 11.)

Quæcumque in ecclesiasticis officiis consistunt, divinis plena sunt mysteriis, de cœlesti dulcedine redundantia, si tamen diligentem habeant inspectorem. DURAND, *Rational.* In procem.

MEDITATION IV.

THE EFFECTS OF ORDINATION.

FIRST POINT. Adore the Son of God instituting at one and the same time the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders and making the Apostles partakers of both at the Last Supper. He begins by consecrating the bread and wine: *Accepit panem, et benedixit et ait: Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.* (MATTH., XXVII, 26.) Then He gives them the power of reproducing this mystery and charges them to perpetuate it among the Christian people till the end of time. *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem. Quotiescumque enim panem hunc manducabitis et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis donec veniat.* (I COR., XI, 25, 26.) Finally having made them His representatives and priests, He declares that they shall no longer be called servants but friends, and proceeds to treat them as

such, opening to them His heart and communicating to them His inmost thoughts and feelings. Then He invokes His Father in their behalf and calls down upon their ministry all His blessings. Behold how great is the love of Our Savior for His ministers and how precious the graces He longs to bestow upon them!

Second Point. The sacrament of Holy Orders has three principal effects which are well worth our consideration.

1. *Character.* Like all sacraments that can be received but once, Holy Orders imprints upon the soul an indelible character, *signum quoddam spirituale et indelebile* (Conc. Trid.), which bears witness at once to the dignity and powers conferred on the recipient and the graces intended for him. Now, of all marks of dignity by which man can be honored there is none greater or more holy. If the character of Baptism raises the Christian above all creatures who have not the title of children of God and members of Our Savior, the character of Holy Orders elevates the cleric above all Christians who are not associated, like him, in the priesthood of the Son of God. He who receives it in its entirety is enabled

not only to have a share in all the graces which the Church can dispense, but also obtains the power of bringing them forth, and bestowing them upon the faithful. Thus St. Thomas teaches that priests will be distinguished in heaven from the rest of the elect by their "character" and that they will find therein the complement of their eternal glory: *Remanebit in bonis sacerdotibus ad eorum gloriam.*

2. *Sanctifying Grace.* This grace poured into the soul together with charity renders the soul pure, holy, and pleasing to God. *Quia caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus vestris per Spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis.* (Rom., v, 5.) *Sicut elegit nos in Christo, ut essemus sancti et immaculati in conspectu ejus in caritate.* (Ephes., i, 4.) The glory of God and the sanctification of souls require the sacred minister to be the more stainless, the more saintly, the more fervent inasmuch as his relations with sanctity itself are closer and more intimate. *Sanctificabor in iis qui appropinquant mihi,* says the Lord, *et glorificabor in conspectu populi.* (Lev., x, 5.) If, then, he responds to the designs of heaven, if he places no obstacle in the way of his own sanctification, the graces which he possesses cannot fail to have an

increase; at each successive ordination God will infallibly augment them in proportion to his promotion in rank. *Quemcumque elegerit Dominus, ipse erit sanctus.* (Num., xvi, 7.)

3. *Sacramental Graces.* While impressing upon the soul a special seal and causing within an increase of sanctifying grace, Holy Orders also confers upon the minister of God a positive and strict right of receiving at the proper time the supernatural helps which he shall need for the worthy and fruitful discharge of his duties: *Ut eat et fructus afferat et fructus ejus maneat.* (Joan., xv, 16.) Just as sanctifying grace leads to his attainment of a state of justice and sanctity befitting the rank which he holds in the sacred ministry, so the actual graces of light and strength which a worthy reception of Orders insures, enable him to conquer the difficulties that he may encounter in the performance of his office. Now, the number and value of these graces are incalculable and beyond all conception.

Third Point. Weigh well these considerations. The higher the appreciation you have of the graces of Holy Orders, the more careful you will be to make yourself worthy of them, the greater will be your

zeal in desiring them, the more vigilant your watchfulness in profiting by them, the greater your fidelity in increasing them and in showing your gratitude for them. Reflect that, if the efficacy of ordination produces within you its real fruit, you ought to be wholly transformed interiorly—*Quam qui accipiunt, quasi alio accepto corde immutantur.* (Saint Greg.) —and that this transformation is essential to make you truly the representative of Jesus Christ, and that the priesthood will avail you little, as the Apostle aptly says, if it does not render you a worthy minister of the New Testament in spirit and truth, before God and man: *idoneum ministrum Novi Testamenti, non littera sed spiritu.* (II Cor., iii, 6.)

Read in the First Book of Kings what Samuel told Saul concerning the fruit which the unction was to produce within him: *Insiliet in te Spiritus Domini et mutaberis in virum alterum*: and what the sacred historian adds: *Immutavit ei Deus cor aliud et insiluit super eum Spiritus Domini.* (I Reg., x, 1, 10.)

MEDITATION V.

THE SOVEREIGN IMPORTANCE OF RECEIVING ORDINATIONS WELL.

First Point. St. Paul advises Timothy not to be too hasty in laying on hands, even in the case of those whom he might be absolutely sure were called to the holy ministry, but rather to delay the conferring of orders till the candidates should have sufficiently progressed in the attainment of the requisite virtues and graces: *Testor coram Deo et Christo Jesu. Manus nemini cito imposueris, neque communicaveris peccatis alienis.* (I Tim., v, 21.) "Not the newly-converted," says the Apostle—*Non neophytum* (III, 6)—"not the uncertain, nor those whose fidelity has not been proved:" *Probentur primum.* (III, 10.) In speaking thus he but lays down the principles followed by the Divine Master in the formation of His Apostles. Though chosen by Himself from the best among the Israelites, yet Our Lord deemed it necessary to employ three years to prepare them for their ministry. Throughout the whole of this period they were to have His example constantly before their eyes and share in His labors; they are His companions in prayer; He teaches them

His maxims; and it is only after He has seen them sufficiently conversant with His doctrine and His maxims, and able to receive profitably the gifts of His Spirit, that He puts into execution His designs by imparting His power and ordaining them to continue His labors. Beg of Our Divine Master grace to profit by this example, and by the lessons of His Apostle.

Second Point. Consider how important it is that ordinands prepare most conscientiously for the reception of Holy Orders.

1. *These orders can be received but once.* Holy Orders is unlike the sacrament of Penance. It is unquestionably a great misfortune and a horrible sacrilege for one to confess and communicate without the requisite dispositions. Yet should this occur and this sin be committed, the evil can be repaired by a good Confession and Communion. But since Holy Orders cannot be repeated, a bad ordination can never be repaired by a better reception of Orders. Of course such a profanation can be forgiven; but its consequences and the punishment it entails can never be taken away. What assurance can there ever be that all the graces thrust aside voluntarily

by such an ordination have been regained by repentance? We must, then, be ready against the coming of the Master, and take in its strictest sense the advice of St. Bernard: *Time Jesum venientem et non revertentem.* Blessed are they whom He shall find ready at His coming! *Beati quos cum venerit Dominus, invenerit vigilantes!* (Luc., xii, 37.) Woe to those who shall have followed in the footsteps of the unfaithful Esau and the perfidious Judas! *Ne quis profanus ut Esau. Scitote enim quoniam et postea cupiens benedictionem reprobatus est: non enim invenit pœnitentiæ locum.* (Heb., xii, 16.)

2. *At ordination a sacramental grace is imparted for our whole life* and is to influence every instant of our existence. The ordinand obtains not only an increase in sanctifying grace, but in addition as we have already seen, a strict right to receive from God at the proper time the helps necessary for the worthy and fruitful performance of his duties. Every time a priest discharges any of his duties he is aided by the Holy Ghost in proportion to the assistance he merited at the time he entered the holy ministry. If his dispositions were not of the highest order then,

he receives less grace: if his dispositions were bad at that moment, then he is entitled to no succor at all. And as an observer may judge by a person's least action what sort of a constitution he was endowed with at birth and in what condition of strength or weakness he is at present, so, very often, it is enough to see a priest preaching, celebrating, praying, etc., to form a prudent estimation of the degree of virtue he possesses and what amount of grace he received at his ordination.

3. *Upon the good or bad ordination of ecclesiastics depends nearly always the salvation or damnation of many souls;* in a measure, what Simeon said of Christ their Master and Model can be applied to every ordinand. *Positus est hic in ruinam aut in resurrectionem multorum in Israel.* (Luc., II, 34.) This is how a holy Pope, St. Leo, puts this truth, at first in his own decrees, and then in the collection of laws made by the Church: *Sacramentum sacerdotalis promotionis præ cæteris omnibus accurate et digne dandum et accipiendum est. Cætera enim sacramenta unicuique propter se dantur, istud non propter se datur sed propter alios; et ideo necesse est ut vero corde nudaque conscien-*

tia sumatur. (DECRET.) A serious defect, then, in your ordination would not be an ordinary sin or simple sacrilege; it would be like an original sin whose guilt you would incur and the pollution of which you would impart to the faithful instead of communicating to them divine grace.

THIRD POINT. What are you doing to prepare yourself for your coming ordinations? Are you profiting by the graces of seminary life? Are you advancing in virtue and knowledge as rapidly as in age? What progress have you made since you received the tonsure? There is no need of being conscious of your virtues and merits; but there is need that you be able to ascertain that you have at heart your spiritual advancement and that you are not leading an indifferent and lukewarm life. Take courage, then, and fortify yourself in your resolutions. Be not content with saying, "I do not want to be ordained unworthily," but rather, "I shall leave no stone unturned in my efforts to bring to my ordination the most perfect dispositions." Be sure that howsoever arduous your preparation be, you will regret it neither in this life nor in the next. But on the contrary, if you are negligent, if you waste

your time, like the unprofitable servant in the parable, you may well fear that you will repent either here or hereafter.

You will do well to read and meditate upon the parable of the negligent servant in St. Luke, xii, 42–48.

MEDITATION VI.

THE IMMEDIATE PREPARATION FOR ORDINATION.

First Point. Observe with what care Our Divine Master prepared His Apostles for the reception of the character and the spirit of the Priesthood. At the Last Supper, before making them priests like Melchisedech, or rather like Himself, Who is the Priest par excellence and the only true High Priest of the Most High, before giving into their hands the eucharistic sacrifice with the power of consecrating His Body and Blood, He begins by washing their feet: *Cœpit lavare pedes eorum.* (Joan., xiii, 5.) He impresses upon them the necessity of being purified from the least stain: *Nisi lavero te, non habebis partem mecum.* Thus does He stir up their humility, their faith and their charity. But it is not enough. That they may be prepared for

the coming of the Holy Ghost, He commands them to dwell ten whole days separated from the world, under the eye of God alone, in meditation and prayer with His Blessed Mother and the disciples: *Sedete in civitate quoadusque induamini virtute ex alto.* (Luc., xxiv, 49.) Thank Our Lord for giving to His Church such an example of preparation for the reception of Orders and for having it recorded in the Scripture. This example is a lesson for you! May it teach you to prepare well for your ordinations and make you worthy of the graces in store for you!

Second Point. Consider the reasons which oblige you to make a fervent proximate preparation.

1. *The Church invites you to do so.* Not only does she offer up special prayers for you at the approach of ordination, not only does she impose works of mortification upon her children then, and recommend your ecclesiastical superiors to come to your aid by calling you to the exercises of a holy retreat, but she also expressly warns you at different times through the voice of the Bishop not to present yourself to him for ordination without having reflected well and brought with you the dispositions which your Orders demand. There is not an ordination

that is not preluded by warnings of this sort: *Videte quæ in domo Domini agere debeatis . . . . Agnoscite officium vestrum. . Iterum atque iterum cogitare debetis.* The Church, then, desires you to prepare for Orders after the manner of the Apostles at the Last Supper and at Pentecost.

2. *The principles of theology make it your duty.* It is the teaching of all the Doctors of the Church that all the Sacraments, Holy Orders included, demand certain dispositions of mind and heart for their fruitful reception, and that the more perfect these dispositions are, the more abundant and precious will be the graces imparted: *Omni habenti dabitur et abundabit.* (MATTH., XXV, 29.) Like the miraculous oil blessed by the Prophet (IV KINGS, IV) the flow of Our Savior's grace is measured by the capacity of the receptacles. It ceases to flow only when they are filled to overflowing and a continuance would mean waste: *Dat enim ibi Dominus benedictionem, ubi vasa vacua invenerit.* (IV IMIT., 15.) *At ubi locum non invenit, oleum stare necesse est.* (S. BERN.) Now, is it not the duty of an aspirant to the priesthood so to shape his actions that the sacrament of Holy Orders may produce within

him all its fruits, and thus secure for his ministry all the blessings intended for it by heaven? He should, then, be more fervent in his preparation the nearer it approaches, by purifying his heart by lively contrition, and expanding his soul with holy aspirations and generous resolutions. *Si quis emundaverit se ab istis*, says the Apostle, speaking of the failings to which a minister of God may become subject, *erit vas in honorem sanctificatum et utile Domino ad omne opus bonum.* (II Tim., II, 12.) *Ego sitienti dabo de fonte aquæ vitæ gratis.* (Apoc., XXI, 6.)

3. *Experience shows the importance of preparation.* Clerics who have already received orders, as well as superiors experienced in the training of ordinands, have come to learn how innumerable are the lights, graces, and sublime sentiments of which a long and fervent preparation is the source. In general, the more an ordinand strives to live in the spirit of God, the more is Our Savior pleased to shower His gifts upon him. A few days of fervent preparation are sufficient to transform a soul and cause it to rise to a perfect life. A good retreat will make us form firm convictions on the teachings of faith, and generously embrace sacrifices from which we have recoiled for years.

THIRD POINT. Promise Our Lord to prepare for Minor Orders even more faithfully than you did for Tonsure. Reflect deeply upon the truths of Christianity and the principles of the sacerdotal life. Prepare your heart by purifying it from the least stain and freeing it from all attachments. Inflame your soul with a lively and ardent desire to belong wholly to your Savior, to live for Him alone, and to act, as far as in you lies, only under the influence of His spirit: *Qui timent Dominum præparabunt corda sua et in conspectu illius sanctificabunt animas suas.* (ECCL., II, 29.) To arouse yourself to greater vigilance and to guard more effectually against surprise, read the two parables related in the twentieth chapter of St. Matthew, that of the ten virgins and that of the two servants.

MEDITATION VII.

IMPORTANCE OF MINOR ORDERS.

FIRST POINT. Adore Our Divine Master proclaiming at the same time the true worth of His Precursor and the greatness of His ministers. He praises highly the mission and virtues of St. John

the Baptist. *Quid existis in desertum videre? Prophetam? Etiam dico vobis et plus quam prophetam. Hic est de quo scriptum est: Ecce ego mitto Angelum meum ante te.* (MATTH., XI, 9, 10.) But lest this eulogy should diminish the esteem due the ministry He was about to establish, and the respect to be paid those whom He should invest with it, He adds, after saying that John the Baptist is a prophet and more than a prophet, that he who holds the lowest rank in the kingdom of God, or who exercises the least ministry in the Church which He had come to found, is greater than John. He receives from God a greater dignity; he has higher functions. *Major inter natos mulierum propheta Joanne Baptista nemo est; qui autem minor est in regno cœlorum major est illo.* (LUC., VII, 28.) Thank Our Savior for these words so striking and so precious to you.

SECOND POINT. From these words must be drawn two conclusions, one referring to Minor Orders, and the other to the Priesthood.

1. Minor Orders are far above, not only all earthly dignities, but also the Levitical ministry and even the missions of those extraordinary men whom God raised up at divers times for the guidance, protection

or reform of His people Israel. This is evident from Our Lord's words, and the conclusion is not at all to be wondered at. Indeed, the importance of the duties to be performed in a society is in proportion to the dignity of the society itself. Now no society can be compared to the Church. The Synagogue is as different from it as the foundation is from the completed edifice, as figure is from reality, as the rough draft is from the finished copy. *Non accessistis ad tractabilem montem et accensibilem ignem,* said the Apostle to the Hebrew converts, *sed accessistis ad Sion montem et civitatem Dei viventis Jerusalem, et Testamenti novi mediatorem Jesum.* (Heb., xii, 18, 22.) There is a still greater difference between the Church of Jesus Christ and civil societies—the difference between heaven and earth, between spirit and matter, between eternity and time; for the end of the latter is the temporal advantages of the present life, while the Church's end is to place us for all eternity in the possession of heavenly happiness. *Quanto ergo anima corpore præstantior est, tanto est sacerdotium regno excellentius,* say the Apostolic Constitutions.

2. Though far superior to worldly honors and to

the dignities of the Mosaic religion, still they are but a first step in the hierarchy of the New Law, and merely the entrance to the ecclesiastical career. He who is invested with these first Orders begins to have a share in the powers of the great High Priest, but a share which is still very small; hence they are called "Minor" and not "Major and "Sacred" like those which are to follow. What is most honorable to their recipient and what should most arouse his gratitude is the fact that they bring him nearer to the priesthood, that they are a promise and an earnest of its sacred character. Soon, after he has served a short time upon the steps of the altar, he will be empowered to ascend them to celebrate the divine sacrifice: *Qui bene ministraverunt gradum bonum sibi acquirent.* (I Tim., III, 13.) To him will fall the happy lot of consecrating the divine Host, of offering It to the Lord, of distributing the Flesh of the Victim to the faithful and filling their souls with His spirit. Already he can say with confidence: *Introibo ad altare Dei*, I shall go up to the altar of God. (Ps. XLII, 4.) This should be the special subject of his wonder and of his thanksgiving.

THIRD POINT. Beg Our Lord to place in your heart a great esteem for Holy Orders and a sovereign veneration for the divine ministry. If you would be permeated with these sentiments, meditate often and prayerfully upon the priesthood. Consider in the light of faith the powers it confers, the obligations it imposes, and the holiness it demands. As a rule the zeal of ecclesiastics for their own sanctification is in proportion to the esteem in which they hold their vocation and its prerogatives; and this esteem increases the more they meditate, exciting by reflection and prayer a lively and practical faith: *Est fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium.* (HEB., XI, 1.)

Recall the sentiments of St. John the Baptist at the sight of Our Savior humbled before him; this is how you ought to humble yourself when you see Him humbled in His churches, making you exercise in His place His authority and His functions. *Ego a te debeo baptizari et tu venis ad me!* (MATTH., III, 14.)

MEDITATION VIII.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARING MOST CAREFULLY FOR THE RECEPTION OF MINOR ORDERS.

First Point. God requires pure hearts and well-prepared souls for the reception of His Spirit. It is very evident that He seldom accords great graces without first having prepared those whom He would thus honor. Often He begins by inspiring them with the thought of these graces; then He causes these favored ones to esteem them, and then to desire them. Such was His plan when He willed to give the Law to Moses and the Pontificate to Aaron. Our Savior followed the same plan with regard to His Apostles. At first He spoke vaguely to them of their vocation; then little by little He unfolded to them its excellence, its obligations, its hardships, and its dangers. Before sending them the Spirit of wisdom and strength, He takes pains to tell them about Him that they may expect His coming and hence prepare to receive Him. This should suffice to make you realize your obligation of acquiring the proper dispositions for Holy Orders, if you wish to receive the plenitude of their graces. *Qui timeni Dominum præparabunt corda sua.* (Eccli., ii, 20.) *Si quis emundaverit se, erit vas in honorem sanctifica-*

tum et utile Domino, ad omne opus bonum paratum. (II Tim., II, 21.)

Second Point. Minor Orders demand, if not greater preparation than Major Orders, at least greater solicitude and more careful attention. The reason is:

1. If you are not on your guard you will be inclined to be negligent in this preparation, and for two reasons—First, because the conferring of Minor Orders, and the exercise of their functions do not appeal forcibly to the senses or inspire awe. They make no change in the exterior position of the ordinand, as do Tonsure and the Subdiaconate. Opportunity of exercising their functions is rare, and even when such presents itself it makes little or no impression because we have often seen the same duties performed by simple laymen, or perhaps we ourselves have performed them before our ordination. There is danger of underestimating them and of being little touched by their performance.

Secondly, because ordinarily these four Orders are received at one time. Each of them deserves a special preparation. The powers, excellence, obligations and virtues of each ought to be successively studied. Considerable time might well be employed

in entering into the spirit of each. Pope St. Innocent the First says: *Ne cito quisquam Lector, ne cito Acolytus fiat.* But what often happens? Less stress is laid upon the preparation for the four Minors put together than for one of those following, or even for simple Tonsure.

2. If you properly prepare for these Orders, that is to say, if you conscientiously endeavor to obtain the dispositions required to receive, at your ordination, the graces which should be its fruit, then there will be every reason to hope that you will dispose yourself equally well for Sacred Orders and that thus you will receive at your ordination to the priesthood graces so abundant that your ministry will be a holy and a fruitful one. Now what could be of greater value to you from any and every viewpoint? If there is anything to be compared to the pearl of great price, which is to be bought at any cost, is it not the grace of a fruitful priesthood and a holy ministry? Who would not say of the spirit of Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, what St. Paul said of His knowledge and love: *Quæ mihi fuerunt lucra, hæc arbitratus sum propter Christum detrimenta. Verumtamen omnia detrimentum facio et arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam.* (PHIL., III, 7, 8.)

THIRD POINT. Promise Our Lord, then, to prepare for your ordination to the best of your ability, by pious reading, serious reflection and frequent prayer. Upon this point listen neither to the world nor to nature, pay no heed to common practice. Listen to the voice of faith alone. Faith, when lively and strong, produces the same effect upon the spirit as optical instruments do upon the senses. It seems to annihilate distance, bringing objects nearer and changing their dimensions and nature. It brings to view innumerable things whose existence was unsuspected, and things which we fancied best known become in its light entirely different from what we thought them: *Quæ per se vilia sunt, fides efficit pretiosa.* Now there is nothing that is so particularly the proper object of faith, nothing in regard to which reason and the senses are less discerning, than Orders and the holy ministry.

In order to excite yourself to prepare well and to become faithful to the first graces of Holy Orders, remember these words of Our Lord: *Euge, serve bone et fidelis: quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, supra multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.* (MATTH. XXV, 21.)

SECTION 2.

THE ORDER OF OSTIARY.

MEDITATION IX.

THE PRIMARY CAUSE AND OBJECT OF THIS ORDER.

First Point. Adore the Son of God burning with zeal for the glory of His Father and the honor of His House. Not content with affording an example of the most perfect exactitude in the sacred precints, He wishes, in addition, to be to His ministers the exemplar of the courage and constancy with which they are to make the churches entrusted to their care respected and venerated. The least irreverence arouses His attention: *Non sinebat ut quisquam transferret vas per templum.* (Marc., xi, 16.) And when the abuse is public and becomes a scandal this Divine Master seems to forget His gentleness and express only wrath: *Cum fecisset quasi flagellum, omnes ejecit de templo; et nummulariorum effudit æs*

et mensas subvertit. (JOAN., II, 15.) *Et dicit eis: Scriptum est; Domus mea, domus orationis vocabitur; vos autem fecistis illam speluncam latronum.* (MATTH. XXI, 13.) In this manner He commenced His ministry, in the same way He closed it. Admire with the Apostles this spirit of Our Divine Master, and beg Him to instil these virtues into your soul.

SECOND POINT. Consider the object of the office of Ostiary.

1. To perpetuate in the Church the example of piety and zeal which Our Lord has given us. As it is of the utmost importance that the faithful have a sovereign regard for God and His worship, He has willed that there be in the ranks of His clergy an order of ministers whose office it is to impress this feeling deeply in their hearts. As there is a minister for sacrifice, another for the Sacred Word, one for Baptism, and still another for the Eucharist, so also is there a minister of the House of God. Our Lord chooses for this office one of those who have already taken Him as their portion and their heritage. He introduces him into His temple, and He entrusts him with its care and management. He places in his hands all the objects of worship and

the treasures of the sanctuary, enjoining upon him to guard and care for them all. Then He says to the Church, "Behold how I honor My Father: I consider that life well-spent whose days have been passed in caring for His House." *Ego honorifico Patrem meum.* (JOAN., VIII, 49.)

Could there be a better means to inspire the faithful with the respect they ought to have for the Majesty of God? In matters of practical conduct, nothing is more efficacious and instructive than example; the greater portion of mankind says with St. Thomas, *Nisi videro non credam.* (JOAN., XX, 25.)

2. To make the presence of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist more real to the faithful and inspire them with a proper appreciation of this stupendous fact. The Son of God is in His Sacrament: He is present as God and as Man: He is there living; but in secret, *in abscondito.* (MATTH., VI, 6.) Faith reveals His presence to us, but nothing manifests it to our senses. Who, then, is to set it before us? Who will stir up our hearts and inspire us with loving regard and solicitude for It?—Images? Statues? The sanctuary lamp? No, these are too little! To the Living God there must be paid the living homage of min-

isters devoted and fully appreciative, whose duty it shall be to repeat unceasingly to blind and uncomprehending mankind, with the Precursor and the Angels of heaven: *Medius vestrum stetit quem vos nescitis* (JOAN., II, 26.) *Ecce tabernaculum Dei cum hominibus et habitabit cum eis; et ipse Deus cum eis erit eorum Deus.* (APOC., XXI, 3.)

3. To see that the Divine Sacrifice is honored by a reverent and decorous attitude on the part of the assembled faithful. This is the Mystery that especially sanctifies our altars and makes our sanctuaries worthy of the admiration of heaven itself. Never has the Man-God more right to veneration, never does He more merit our adoration, than when He thus abases Himself, even to immolation, before the greatness of His Father: *Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est accipere virtutem et divinitatem et fortitudinem et honorem et benedictionem in sæcula sæculorum.* (APOC., V, 12.) Should it not be the first duty of the priest and his dearest privilege to honor the Lamb of God during the sacred Mysteries and to give to the faithful an example of the veneration and adoration which are due to the Divine Victim?

Third Point. Thank the Son of God for having chosen you to watch and guard over the dignity of His mysteries. How your faith should make you rejoice at such a lot! *Beati oculi qui vident quæ vos videtis. Dico enim vobis quod multi prophetæ et reges voluerunt videre et non viderunt!* (Luc., x, 23.) David, who so ardently longed to build a temple to His Lord, would have preferred your office to his royal crown: *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine virtutum! Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine! Quia melior est dies una in atriis tuis super millia! Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum.* (Ps. lxxxiii, 11.) Implore your Divine Master to cause like sentiments ever to reign in your soul. *Filius honorat patrem et servus Dominum suum. Si ergo pater ego sum, ubi est honor meus? et si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus?* says the Lord in Malachy.

These words, St. Cyril of Alexandria tells us, are addressed to the ministers of the altar, to those who have not at heart the glory of the divine majesty: *De iis hoc intelligendum est qui sacro altari servare non student congruam ac debitam reverentiam.*

MEDITATION X.

THE DIGNITY OF THE OFFICE OF OSTIARY IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

First Point. Adore in the Person of the Word made Flesh the source of all light and supernatural gifts. He alone is capable of giving us an adequate idea of His perfections: He alone can make us fully appreciate all that appertains to His worship and concerns His glory: *Nemo novit Patrem nisi Filius et cui voluerit Filius revelare.* (Matth., xi, 27.) But it is to humble souls and loving hearts that He communicates His secrets. Bless Our Divine Master that this is so, as He Himself blessed His Father for it: *Confiteor tibi, Pater, quia abscondisti hæc a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis.* (Matth., xi, 25.) Protest to Him that you are His disciple and that you desire to know His sentiments only that you may conform your own to them and make them the rule of your life.

Second Point. If the office of Porter of the House of God seems to you of little distinction, consider the sentiments of Our Lord on this point: they are revealed to us by His own actions and the feelings with which He inspired the Saints.

1. In becoming man, the Son of God annihilated Himself that He might offer fitting homage to His Father. He placed all his happiness in honoring the Divine Majesty even to the detriment of His own glory, that is, at the expense of all the esteem and regard that His humanity could obtain here below. His motto was: *Non quæro gloriam meam, sed honorifico Patrem meum.* (JOAN., VIII, 49.) He prayed with the people in the House of His Father; He loved the beauty of its sanctuary, and, not content with being a model of piety and prayer, He was ever solicitous to maintain decorum and recollection in the Temple. When He saw its holiness profaned, He seemed unable to contain Himself. The indignation that He experienced was as a fire that encompassed His soul and carried Him to holy excess: *Et docebat dicens: Nonne scriptum est: Quia domus mea domus orationis vocabitur?* (MARC., XI, 17.) *Nolite facere domum Patris mei domum negotiationis.* (JOAN. I, 16.) Inspired with such a spirit of religion and such an ardor for the glory of the Divine Majesty, is it conceivable that Our Lord should not have deeply at heart the honor of His churches and the splendor of His solemnities? How could He fail to bless those

who consecrate themselves to their care? How could He but attach to their least duties the greatest importance and count their least offices far beyond all the dignities and honors of the world?

2. The feelings of holy priests and fervent ecclesiastics cannot differ from those of Our Lord, whose representatives and mouth-pieces they are: *Qui adhæret Domino, unus Spiritus est.* (I Cor., vi, 17.) But if you wish to know what they have thought of Minor Orders, that of Porter in particular, you have only to read their lives and recall their words. Take St. Paulinus, for example. After he had left the world and consecrated himself to God, this rich personage, this former consul, this worthy friend of Ambrose, of Jerome, and of Augustine, whom the church of Rome had been proud to raise to its episcopal throne, avers that he has but one ambition, that he seeks but one pleasure—to exercise the humble office of Porter in the church of St. Peter of Nola, to embellish its sanctuary, to sweep it by day and guard it by night. Take Nepotian, that young priest resplendent with so many gifts and of such rare worth that St. Jerome suspends his scriptural labors in order to transmit to posterity an encomium of

his virtues. He made the House of God his dwelling-place and seldom went out of it: *Ubicumque eum quæreres, in ecclesia invenires.* His aim and his happiness lay in causing order, neatness and godliness to prevail in every corner. Nothing seemed of too little consequence to claim his attention. *Erat sollicitus si niteret altare, si pavimenta tersa, si parietes absque fuligine, si vela semper in ostiis, si sacrarium mundum, si vasa luculenta; et in omnes cæremonias pia sollicitudo disposita non majus, non minus negligebat officium.* But is this not even now a characteristic of all saintly priests? Seeing nothing greater than God they place their glory in humbling themselves with and for Him, and in doing homage to His abasement by sharing in it. The lower in the eyes of men are the functions which they perform, the more honorable and dear they become to them: *Ante Dominum vilior fiam plus quam factus sum,* say they with the Psalmist, *et ero humilis in oculis meis.* (II Reg., vi, 22.)

Third Point. Give thanks to the Son of God for the honor He has conferred upon you and for the office he has entrusted to you in His House: *Beatus quem elegisti et assumpsisti: inhabitabit in atriis*

tuis, Domine. (Ps. LXIV, 5.) Implore Him to bestow upon your heart enlightened eyes that you may know and appreciate this great favor: *Det vobis illuminatos oculos cordis, ut sciatis quæ sit spes vocationis ejus et quæ divitiæ hæreditatis ejus in sanctis.* (Eph., I, 17.)

The eyes of the heart are the supernatural lights with which faith illumines the soul concerning God and divine things. He who has even but a small comprehension of these things can have esteem for no other: *Cernenti in luce Deum, angustum est omne quod cernitur.* (Saint Greg.) And he who has esteem only for God and divine things, infinitely appreciates all that contributes to His glory and thus draws down upon himself His blessings.

Father Eudes had the spirit of religion in the highest degree. One day he was apportioning off to the members of his community the different offices; reaching that of sacristan, he paused and said, with a deep feeling of piety which touched the hearts of all, "Here is the holiest charge in the house."

MEDITATION XI.

PREROGATIVES OF THE ORDER OF OSTIARY: HONOR, ADVANTAGES, HOLINESS.

First Point. Adore in the Person of the Son of God made Man the plenitude of all perfection, light, power, and glory: *Quia in ipso complacuit omnem plenitudinem habitare.* (Col., i, 19.) He is not only sovereign, He is also alone in all that He is, in all that He possesses, and in all that He does. Confess with the Church that He alone is holy, He alone great, He alone the Most High: *Tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.*

Acknowledge Him as your only Master and your only Lord: *Solum Dominatorem et Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.* (Jud., 4.) Congratulate yourself that you belong to Him as an ecclesiastic by a special title, and beseech Him to make you appreciate all the blessings that your ministry secures for you.

Second Point. Consider how honorable, profitable, and holy a career it is to be attached as you are to the service of the Man-God.

1. It is regarded as highly honorable to be in the service of a prince, to be connected with him, to be

of his household. The greater the prince, the more illustrious and powerful, the more do his retainers glory in having him for their lord and in proclaiming themselves his servants. According to this principle, how glorious is it to be in the service of the Son of God, to be numbered among His ministers! The Son of God is not a mere prince of this world; He is not a mortal king whose power is limited and perishable, He is the absolute Master of heaven and earth, the immortal King of ages, the Creator, and the Supreme Arbiter of all that exists: *Vocatur nomen ejus Verbum Dei, habet in vestimento suo scriptum: Rex regum et Dominus Dominantium.* (Apoc. xix, 13, 16.) Furthermore, are there any titles more magnificent than those which the Holy Ghost and the Church apply to His ministers? *Vos sacerdotes Domini vocabimini, ministri Dei nostri dicetur vobis. Fortitudinem gentium comedetis et in gloria eorum superbietis. Omnes qui viderint agnoscent quia isti sunt semen cui benedixit Dominus.* (Isai., lxi, 6, 9.)

2. It is considered a great prerogative to serve a master who is rich, generous and powerful. What master is there who for wealth, generosity and power can be compared to the Son of God made Man? His

charity is boundless, His treasures are without measure. All that appertains to the Father, belongs also to the Son, and the whole world is in His hands: *Omnia dedit ei Pater in manus.* (JOAN., XIII, 3.) *Quem fecit hæredem universorum.* (HEB., I, 2.) In entrusting to the Apostles their mission He tells them that all power is given Him in heaven and on earth, and that there is nothing that He cannot turn to their profit: *Data est mihi omnis potestas in cælo et in terra.* (MATTH., XXVIII, 18.) What gratitude do you owe Him for having attached you so closely to His person and destined you to so large a share in His graces! *Benedictus Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui benedixit nos in omni benedictione spirituali in cœlestibus in Christo, ut ostenderet abundantes divitias gratiæ suæ super nos in Christo Jesu.* (EPH., I, 3.)

3. He is esteemed happy who can look back upon a life nobly employed in great actions and in coöperation in eminent and holy works. But where is the undertaking that for nobility and greatness, as well as for sanctity, can be compared to the mission which brought Our Savior upon earth and whose accomplishment He has entrusted to the Church?

Manifeste magnum est pietatis sacramentum, quod manifestum est in carne, apparuit angelis, prædicatum est gentibus, creditum est in mundo, assumptum est in gloria. (I Tim., iii, 16.) And who are given a greater part in this mission than ecclesiastics? What relates more directly to it than the exercise of the functions of Holy Orders and the celebration of the Divine Offices? All the duties of the holy ministry, says the Apostle, tend to the same end: *Ad consummationem sanctorum, in opus ministerii, in ædificationem corporis Christi, in unitatem fidei, in mensuram ætatis plenitudinis Christi.* (Eph., iv, 12, 13.)

Third Point. Thus in whatever order a minister of God may be, whatever the functions he has to perform, he cannot estimate too highly his lot. He has reason to say with the Psalmist: *Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris: etenim hæreditas mea præclara est mihi.* (Ps. xv, 6.) If the Queen of Sheba, rapt in admiration at the grandeur of Solomon and the magnificence of his house, cried out in astonishment: *Beati viri tui et beati servi tui qui assistunt coram te in omni tempore!* (II Par., ix, 7) what should faith make us think of the ministers of the Word made Flesh, the true Solomon, who are called to

spend their lives in His temples, before His tabernacles, and at the foot of His altars! *Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum, omnes servi Domini, qui statis in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostri. In noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta et benedicite Dominum!* (Ps. CXXXIII, 1, 2.)

Read in Part I, nos. XX and XXI, what is related about Father Yvan, of his love for churches, his zeal for the Blessed Sacrament and the pleasure he experienced in dwelling in His sanctuary and adorning His altars.

MEDITATION XII.

THE CARE OF CHURCHES.

First Point. Adore the Holy Ghost inspiring the children of God with a deep regard and a tender affection for the House of their Father. Even under the Old Law the Psalmist shows that he was animated with such sentiments: *Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.* (Ps. XXV, 8.) *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine virtutum! Etenim passer invenit sibi domum. Altaria tua, Domine virtutum, Rex meus et Deus meus!* (Ps. LXXIII, 1, 4.) Far more lively and tender still is the love of fervent

Christians for their churches, for those sanctuaries wherein the Man-God dwells as truly as in heaven, for those altars upon which He immolates Himself in sacrifice and from which He renders to His Father homage of infinite value, for those tabernacles where He receives their adoration and whence He deigns to come forth to nourish their souls and animate them with His divine Life. But above all, with what ardor should this feeling pervade the mind and heart of an ecclesiastic, specially consecrated as He is to the worship of Our Savior and to the care of His Temple! Implore Our Lord to make you enter into these dispositions.

Second Point. Consider why it is of the utmost importance that our churches be venerated and well-cared for:

1. *That the faithful may be inspired with the spirit of religion.* A church that is perfectly kept, within which cleanliness reigns, where silence is observed, and everything inspires reverence and invites to prayer, is a public and unceasing homage paid to the Divine Majesty. It is the best sermon that can be preached to the people on the Real Presence, the excellence of the Holy Sacrifice and the honor due

the divine Mysteries. The most efficacious means that we possess to implant the conviction of these truths in men's minds and hearts is to place ever before their eyes the irrefragible testimony of our own convictions put into practice: *Nihil est quod alios magis ad pietatem ac Dei cultum assidue instruat*, says the Council of Trent, *quam eorum exemplum qui se divino ministerio dedicarunt.*

2. *To give vent to the ardor of our faith and evidence of its existence.* When a man firmly believes in the Divinity of Jesus Christ and His Real Presence on our altars and in the Holy Eucharist, how can he but feel the necessity of honoring Him in His Sacrament, and of making Him known and loved by the faithful? How can he help surrounding Him with every token of faith, veneration, devotion, and love? This way of acting is so natural that it would be difficult not to doubt the fervor of an ecclesiastic who would appear indifferent to the adornment and embellishment of the sacred precincts, who would have no solicitude for their care. Even though this indifference be not an indication of a want of real faith properly so-called, yet would it not at least indicate a want of liveliness and strength in his con-

victions? *Mens Christo dedita æque et in majoribus et in minoribus intenta est*, says St. Jerome speaking precisely of the pains to be taken in the care of churches and the celebration of the Holy Offices.

3. *To preserve and increase our devotion to Our Lord.* If nothing so well becomes the priest, as the care of the House of God, nothing, St. Ambrose teaches, is better calculated to nourish and animate his piety. No matter whether he be an ecclesiastic or a layman, a person naturally harmonizes his feelings and thoughts with his surroundings and with the things constantly before his eyes. A recollected assemblage fosters recollection; a noisy gathering begets dissipation; a display of mourning incites sadness; it takes little effort to pray before a holy image. *A fortiori*, will one be impelled to recollection, to restraint of the senses and to thoughts of Our Lord, when he is in the sanctuary where everything betokens the desire to make Him revered and loved: *in quo inhabitat plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter.* (Col., II, 16.) And if but a moment in the sanctuary is sufficient to make this thoroughly felt, how could one fail to be influenced by continual daily proximity to it?

THIRD POINT. Acknowledge the great importance of your receiving in plenitude the graces of this first Order. The ecclesiastic who has zeal for the glory of the House of God, and takes good care of it, edifies the faithful, honors Our Lord, and grows in faith, fervor and merits. He who lacks these dispositions or has them insufficiently, is exposed to the danger of being wanting in proper respect, first for the church, then for the sanctuary, and finally for the altar and the tabernacle itself. He gives but little edification, he prays badly, his faith and zeal and his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament will languish, and perchance soon become wholly extinct. *Dicit Dominus: Quicumque glorificaverit me glorificabo eum; qui autem contemnunt me, erunt ignobiles.* (II REG., II, 30.)

MEDITATION XIII.

OTHER OBLIGATIONS OF THIS ORDER.

FIRST POINT. Adore the Son of God burning with zeal for the glory of His Father and seeking to spread the fire which consumes Him: *Ignem veni mittere in terram,* he says, *et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?* (LUC., XII, 49.) It is this zeal that caused

Him to humble Himself by His birth, give Himself to unceasing labor, suffer and be delivered up to death, offer Himself in sacrifice upon our altars, and come into our hearts in Communion. He aspires only to glorify His Father. (JOHN, VII, 44.) But all His labors are insufficient to satisfy the ardor which burns within Him; what He does Himself is very little in comparison to that which He seeks to do through His members: *Quid volo nisi ut accendatur?* Offer Him your heart that He may inflame it with the same fire. Thank Him for having given you in the duties of your Order a means of contributing as well as He to the glory of the Divine Majesty and beg of Him the grace to supply by the liveliness of your desires for the feebleness of your deeds.

SECOND POINT. Besides His churches and material temples, God has three other sanctuaries in which his ministers offer Him worship—namely, the souls of the faithful, the Catholic Church, and Heaven. Consider what are your obligations towards each of the three.

1. *Towards souls.* The Bishop admonishes you that you are to spread the reign of Jesus Christ in souls, and that you must neglect no means which

will enable you to do so successfully: *Studete ut, sicut materialibus clavibus ecclesiam visibilem aperitis et clauditis, sic et invisibilem Dei domum, corda scilicet fidelium dictis et exemplis vestris claudatis diabolo et aperiatis Deo.* (PONTIF.) "*Studete,*" says the Bishop: zeal, application and effort are absolutely necessary. "*Invisibilem Dei domum:*" God is spirit. Is it astonishing, then, that His temples of predilection, the temples in which He desires most to be honored, should be spiritual? "*Dictis et exemplis:*" it is by edification, joining example to words, that those in Minor Orders can fruitfully exercise their zeal and infuse into souls the love of religion.

2. *Towards the Catholic Church.* To edify but one of the faithful and win him to the practice of virtue, to sanctify but one soul, is to erect a tabernacle to God, to give to Him a living sanctuary; but such a sanctuary has little place upon this earth, and will remain here only briefly. Our Lord has raised to His Father a sanctuary far vaster and more durable—the Catholic Church, that Church which, founded upon Peter, is to last till the world shall have passed away, and embraces within its fold all souls regenerated by His Spirit: *Vos coædificamini*

in habitaculum Dei in spiritu; . . . . superædificati super fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum, ipso summo angulari lapide Christo Jesu, in quo omnis ædificatio constructa crescit in templum sanctum in Domino. (EPH., II, 22.) Behold what is here on earth the House of God *par excellence.* If your zeal has for its object the Divine Majesty, can it be better directed than towards the Church, since it is the Church that serves Him best and gives Him more glory than any other creation?

3. *Towards the Church in Heaven. Post hæc vidi et apertum est templum Dei in cælo.* The Church in heaven does not differ substantially from that on earth—it is the same Catholic Church, but purified, transformed, perfected and glorified, in union with the Three Divine Persons. It is indeed by far the most august, the holiest sanctuary, and the most worthy of divine worship that can be conceived of. In addition, is it not the end towards which all the plans and works of the Holy Trinity tend? Is it not only proper that it should also be the object of all your affections and the final end of all your efforts? Would you have for the glory of God all the zeal you ought to have, if you did not strive with all your

heart to increase, as far as lies in your power, the splendors and marvels of His eternal dwelling?

Third Point. Admire the grandeur of Christianity, the profundity of the Church's concepts, and the sublimity of the advice which she gives to her ministers! When only the external functions of this Order are considered, they may appear easy to perform, and to impose no great burden. But if you go beneath the surface, if you ponder well the recommendations made to you, you will soon see that from the very first moment of your entrance upon your charge you have cause to tremble under the responsibility imposed and to be humbled at the manner in which you acquit yourself of your obligations. These are the sentiments of all saintly clerics. Implore God to give to you, as He has to them, the lights necessary to know your obligation and strength sufficient to discharge them well: *Ut inter janitores Ecclesiæ Dei pareas obsequio et inter electos partem ejus merearis habere mercedis.* (Pontif.)

Tantum quisque amat Deum quantum amat Ecclesiam Dei. (S. Aug. *In Joan.*, xxxii.)

MEDITATION XIV.

THE SPIRIT OF THE ORDER OF OSTIARY.

First Point. Picture to yourself the Son of God promising Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, the supreme dominion over His Church. It is likewise under the emblem of keys that the bishop confers upon the Porter the power proper to his office and the grace necessary to fill it well: *Tradit omnibus claves ecclesiæ, dicens: Sic agite, quasi reddituri Deo rationem pro iis rebus quæ his clavibus recluduntur.* (Pontif.) The Ostiary receives, then, over the House of God, the material church, an authority analogous to that which was given Peter over the universal Church. Whatever be the difference between these two commissions in extent and sublimity, they both have the same origin, the same end; they are equally supernatural. Since Our Lord deigns thus to confer upon you a measure of the power of the Chief of the Apostles, ought you not to endeavor in presence of so precious and so unmerited a gift to awaken in your bosom feelings of humility, gratitude and devotedness similar to those of St. Peter?

Second Point. Consider the thoughts, sentiments, and fervor with which you should perform these functions.

1. *Thoughts.* All rites being hidden and symbolical, he who has an office to discharge should seek to know the meaning of its duties. Thus, when ringing the bell for the services, and when opening the church to the faithful, the Ostiary should meditate upon the divine mercy which calls all men to heaven and wishes to have them for adorers that it may lead them with its gifts and make them eternally happy: *Hoc enim bonum est et acceptum coram Salvatore nostro Deo, qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri et ad agnitionem veritatis venire.* (II PET., III, 9.) When sweeping and cleaning the Church he should recall that God is all purity and all holiness, that He can suffer no stain in His servitors, and above all in His ministers: *Lavamini, mundi estote, auferte malum cogitationum vestrarum ab oculis meis; et venite, dicit Dominus.* (ISAI., I, 16.) When expelling from the sanctuary or church those whose presence its sanctity excludes, he should call to mind the separation of the good from the bad to be made by Our Lord at the last Judgment, *sicut pastor segregat oves ab hœdis* (MATTH., XXV, 32), and think of the rigor with which the Divine Justice, before opening the tabernacles of heaven to the elect, will cast far

away all those who shall not have conducted themselves here below as worthy children of God: *Foris canes et impudici et idolis servientes, et omnis qui amat et facit mendacium.* (Apoc., xxii, 15.) Are these not the thoughts suggested to a man of faith by such functions?

2. *Feelings.* Since all the functions of the Ostiary are holy, they are to be performed in a holy manner, with sentiments of faith and from a motive of religion. Religion should be the leading incentive in his care of the sacred vessels, his custody of the appurtenances of the altar, and in his watchfulness lest anything but what is befitting and edifying take place within the Church. He should call the faithful to the Offices and give the signal for the divine mysteries *quasi vox Dei ad extra* in a spirit of charity and with a lively desire for the sanctification of souls. Finally it is through zeal for the honor of God that he is to maintain constantly within the sacred edifice order, modesty and recollection, and cause the observance, as far as befitting under the Law of Grace, of the recommendation which the Lord addressed on another occasion to the children of Israel: *Pavete ad sanctuarium meum.* (Lev., xxvi, 2.)

3. *Fervor.* His sense of religion must be all the more profound now that he is better able to comprehend the grandeur of the divine perfections; his charity the more lively, now that he is consecrated to the service of his brethren and better able to know their needs; his zeal for the glory of God the more ardent, now that he is set apart more completely to its service and receives more abundant graces. This is the reason why the bishop begs of God for him the grace of perfect fidelity and constant application to the duties of his office: *in eis fidelissima cura in domo Dei.* (PONTIF.) *Cura fidelissima*, a solicitude not only vigilant but faithful, i.e., inspired by the spirit of faith and rendering him entirely trustworthy.

THIRD POINT. Recognize the holiness of this first Order and how important it is fully to possess its true spirit. Upon this depends the facility which you will have in performing its functions well and faithfully discharging its duties. It is possible to receive this spirit incompletely. "In the conferring of Orders," says Père Condren, "all the ordinands receive the character and the powers; most of them receive grace—but too few receive the spirit of their order!" Beg, then, of God this spirit; pray to Him

to give it to you in its fullness. What should inspire you with confidence is Our Lord's desire to bestow it upon all, and the fact that He never denies it to those who sincerely beseech Him for it with the firm intention of preserving it and putting it to profit: *Omnis qui petit accipit, et qui quærit invenit, et pulsanti aperietur. Si vos, cum sitis mali nostis bona data dare filiis vestris, quanto magis Pater vester de cœlo spiritum bonum dabit petentibus se!* (Luc., xi, 12, 13.) The Psalter contains most touching expressions of religious love and zeal for the House of God and divine worship. You may study, with this point in mind, Psalms xxv, xli, xlii, lxxviii, lxxxiii and cxxxi, in order to imbue yourself with the thoughts they express. *Domine Deus meus, parvulorum sublimitas et humilium altitudo, da mihi indigno famulo tuo diligere decorem domus tuæ et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ. Infunde in animam meam benedictionem tuam et gratiam tuam ut idoneus efficiar in templo sancto tuo quæ cultûs tui sunt digne peragere et templum in corde meo, quod tu, ô Deus meus semper inhabitas, extruere merear, qui vivis. . . . .*

MEDITATION XV.

ON PUNCTUALITY IN PERFORMING THE SACRED OFFICES.

First Point. Adore Divine Wisdom regulating even in details the least observances of the Old Law; appointing days both of rest and of solemn feasts, determining the hours of sacrifice and of public prayer, prescribing the duties to be fulfilled and the ceremonies to be performed: *Non facietis singuli quod sibi rectum videtur.* (Deut., xii, 8.) Not even the high priest was exempt from the Law: *Loquere ad Aaron, ne in omni tempore ingrediatur sanctuarium.* (Lev., xvi, 2.) So should we act in the New Law. The Church desires that nothing should be left to our caprice, but that everything should be done, as the Apostle says, *honeste et secundum ordinem.* (I Cor., xiv, 40.) One of the chief duties of the Ostiary is to see that the services be celebrated at the appointed hours. Ask our Savior to make you realize the importance of this obligation and to make you faithful in performing it.

Second Point. Consider how important and how meritorious it is, from every point of view, to be punctual and exact in celebrating the holy offices.

1. *God's glory demands it.* Punctuality and exactness are acts of submission which His Majesty requires. When those in authority appoint a certain hour for service, it ought to be considered as the will of God. Not to comply with the ordinance, without a sufficient reason, would be a sign of little respect for God's will and would provoke His displeasure: *Quare jejunavimus et non aspexisti,* said the Jews to their God; *humiliavimus animas nostras et nescisti?* Then their God answered: *Ecce in die jejunii vestri invenitur voluntas vestra. Numquid tale est jejunium quod elegi?* (Isai., lviii, 3–5.) Would He have less to complain of if, in celebrating the holy offices, we prefer our whims and caprice to His Holy will? We are indeed amazed when we hear of a minister of the Lord who prefers his own pleasure to that of his Master. This disorder is never more lamentable than when the priest is about to sacrifice the Son of God and to repeat on the altar the immolation of Calvary: *Multo enim melior est obedientia quam stultorum victimæ qui nesciunt quid faciunt.* (Eccli., iv, 17.)

2. *The spiritual interests of the people.* When those in authority do not prescribe settled regulations

for services, we ought to be guided by the welfare of souls. It is our duty to help the devotion of pious souls and to put ourselves to a certain amount of trouble to satisfy their desires and needs: *Cum liber essem ex omnibus, omnium me servum feci*, said the Apostle. (I Cor., ix, 19.) *Nos autem servos vestros per Jesum.* (II Cor., iv, 5.) It is of great interest to many that Mass and the other services be celebrated at a fixed hour, neither too early nor too late. If we do not consider their convenience, but add to the number of difficulties which their piety encounters, do we not incur responsibility for their complaints and expose them to the danger of becoming lukewarm? May God preserve us from being among those of whom it is said: *Retrahebant homines a sacrificio Domini.* (I Reg., ii, 17.)

3. *Our own sanctification.* If a priest be not punctual in celebrating Mass and the other offices, when will he practice regularity? Most likely he will live without a rule and will spend his days merely according to his fancy. He will be led, not by the spirit of God but by his own whims. Instead of saying with our Savior: *Non quæro voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me* (John v,

30), it is as if he said: *Non quæro voluntatem ejus.* Each moment of his life will deserve punishment rather than merit reward. He will live, not as a child of God, but as a son of Adam, an egotist, a sinner. Such is surely not the life of holiness becoming in the priest.

THIRD POINT. Offer our Savior your entire will and beg Him to accept it unreservedly and for ever. Beseech Him to give you the grace to accomplish all your duties in a manner agreeable to Him, having no other motive than His glory, no other rule but His will, neither anticipating through impatience nor delaying on account of laziness or preoccupation: *Ut sit tibi fidelissima cura diebus ac noctibus ad distinctionem certarum horarum ad invocandum nomen Domini.* (PONTIF.) Fidelity to this practice is a mark of solid virtue and is deserving of no small reward.

Non est devotionis dedisse prope totum, sed fraudis est retinuisse vel minimum. (ST. PROSPER.)

MEDITATION XVI.

ON THE DEVOTION THE OSTIARY OUGHT TO HAVE FOR THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

First Point. Adore our Savior's humanity concealed under the Eucharistic veil: *Ave, verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine.* Or rather, acknowledge in this mystery the presence of the Incarnate Word as God and as Man; with His power and perfections as well as with His graces and His virtues:

Adoro te, devote, latens deitas,
Quæ sub his figuris vere latitas.

He is the glory of our churches, the victim of our altars, the treasure of our tabernacles and the object of our worship. Is it not just that He should also be the center of our thoughts and the delight of our hearts? *Etenim passer invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum sibi, ubi ponat pullos suos: altaria tua, Domine virtutum, Rex meus et Deus meus!* Entreat this God made Man, annihilated for your love, to draw you to Him, to fill your soul with a lively faith, a sovereign awe and a zeal more and more ardent for His divine Sacrament:

Jesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio,
Fac me tibi semper magis credere,
In te spem habere, te diligere.

Second Point. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is necessary for all ministers of the Church, but it is particularly essential for those who are entrusted with the care of the House of God.

1. *Without this devotion they would acquire little merit.* What God considers and what He will some day reward us for is not so much what we accomplish in His service as the spirit, the purity of intention, the charity and the fervor which animate us in doing our duty: *Magis pensat ex quanto amore agatur, quam quantum opus fiat.* (Imit., I, 15.) We can labor much even in the Church and merit little. This misfortune befalls those who have no devotion to the Holy Eucharist, for they are exposed to the danger of seeking the esteem of men; of seeing in their functions only exterior practices and of performing them, without the spirit of religion, through routine or from purely human motives. We can, however, acquire great merit from these duties provided we cultivate a lively faith in the Blessed Sac-

rament and a deep devotion to our Savior. Being constantly in His presence we shall desire to live for Him alone. His glory will be our object, His greatness will call forth our reverence, His love will move us to do our best. In this manner our ministry will be a continual exercise of charity and each duty will be for us a source of merit and benediction. Are these your dispositions? Do you know how to profit by your work in God's service. *Videte vosmetipsos, ne perdatis quæ operati estis, sed ut mercedem plenam accipiatis.* (I JOAN., I, 8.)

2. *Without this devotion, the Ostiary will be inclined to omit a part of the duties of his office.* Ordinarily his duties are not accurately determined by positive laws. It is left to his conscience to determine the extent and appreciate the importance of each function. If he is to have a solid devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, an ardent love for the Blessed Eucharist, he will be deeply impressed by what our Savior's glory demands of him and he will avoid even the least imperfections. Thus did Nepotian act in following the advice of St. Jerome: *In omnes cæremonias pia sollicitudo disposita non minus, non majus, negligebat officium. Ubicumque eum quæreres, in ec-*

clesia invenires. If however the Ostiary acts from other motives, if he looks upon the House of God as an ordinary building, he will regard his functions and duties as commonplace occupations, and they will become burdensome to him: *Absque igne quis ignem accendet, et sine caritate quis officium caritatis consummabit?*

3. *Without this devotion the Ostiary will be in danger of being ashamed of his office and its obligations.* Nearly all ecclesiastical functions performed in the church are centered around the tabernacle and derive their importance from the majesty of the Man-God who dwells among us. If the Ostiary does not realize this presence and entertain a profound respect for this majesty, he will not attach much importance to his duties; then he will be inclined to neglect them and perhaps be ashamed of them. Would to God this fear were imaginary and that we never saw an ecclesiastic ashamed of those duties which he must perform in the presence of the King of Kings!

Third Point. Never neglect anything calculated to develop in you a lively faith and filial piety towards the Holy Eucharist. Accustom yourself never to enter the church, and particularly the sanc-

tuary, without recalling the presence and greatness of Him Who resides there. Say with Jacob: O my soul, O my soul the Lord is truly here, *Vere Dominus est in loco isto.* Or repeat with the Psalmist: *Introibo ad altare Dei.* (Ps. XLII.) *Adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus.* (Ps. CXXXI, 7.) May others say of you as was said of Moses: *Fide invisibilem tanquam videns, sustinuit.* (HEB., XI, 27.) This is one of the positive signs of a sacerdotal vocation. It is the best guarantee of our fidelity, the best token we can have that in the exercise of our functions and the practice of the priestly ministry we shall sanctify our souls. A fervent religious, Mme. Rivier, whose canonization is being considered today, once said to her sisters: "When I enter the church, I feel such respect that, if I dared, I would prostrate myself on the ground and would go to the altar only on my knees."

MEDITATION XVII.

FATHER OLIER'S ZEAL FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD.

FIRST POINT. Adore our Savior, the model and source of that zeal for His Father's House, which has consumed so many holy priests. Admire the

activity, intensity and fecundity of this zeal. It has erected many religious edifices and added solemnity to divine worship. Within the last century what work has been accomplished among us! Such work is indeed due to the generosity of the faithful, but it tells more clearly still of the zeal and the devotion of their pastors. Many priests made the building or the adorning of churches their chief occupation. Being ashamed of the poverty to which their Master was reduced they said with the Psalmist, Woe to me if I do not provide a better house for my Lord, if, well-housed myself, I neglect His dwelling-place. (Ps. CXXX, 4, 5.) To give to the Lord a sanctuary, an altar, a tabernacle worthy of Him they willingly reduced themselves to poverty. They appealed to the liberality of the rich and encouraged the poor to give their mite. God alone knows how many acts of virtue, of self-denial, of generosity each church, each precious vestment has cost His ministers. Bless Him for having inspired the clergy with such a spirit and ask Him for a share in it.

SECOND POINT. Father Olier, the founder of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, and pastor of the principal parish in Paris, possessed, in an eminent degree,

that virtue of religion the grace of which is bestowed on us with the order of Ostiary. Consider his sentiments towards his church, what he did to make it worthy of its pupose and what devotion he caused to prevail there.

1. What he honored, what was so dear to him in his church, was our Savior's presence hidden under the Eucharistic species. "How many times," says he, "thinking of how He is forgotten I have had this thought: Oh! if I were pastor of this parish, I would labor to have our Savior better known and more adored. Often returning from the country in the evening and finding the doors of the church closed, I would look through the cracks of the wood and seeing the lamps burning before the altar, I would say: Alas! how fortunate you are to be thus able to consume yourself in adoring Jesus and making His presence known. Would that I were, like St. John the Baptist, an ever burning lamp, to show Christians what he pointed out to the Jews, namely, the hidden grandeur of Him who annihilated Himself in our midst." When Father Olier became pastor of this church his chief idea was to honor our Savior and to speak of the mysteries of His life and of His Eucha-

ristic presence. He omitted nothing which would increase in the faithful esteem for the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Communion. God blessed his efforts. In a short time the spirit of piety was reawakened and the parish was rejuvenated. Crowds came to Mass, and they were very assiduous at the other services, particularly the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Holy Table was frequented regularly. Our Lord was visited, honored and escorted respectfully in processions and to the homes of the sick. When this holy priest preached to the faithful on devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, it seemed as if all other doctrines were revealed to them and they had just begun to appreciate them.

2. Father Olier labored to make both the church and its service less unworthy of Him to whose worship they were dedicated. Thanks to many pious friends he made, in a short time, the repairs which decency and propriety demanded. The furniture was renewed and the sanctuary and nave repaved; the sacristy was completely furnished. The altars were reconstructed and richly adorned. Before the Blessed Sacrament, seven costly lamps were perpetually burning to recall the seven candlesticks kept

always alight before the Tabernacle and to represent the seven glorious spirits who stand ever before the throne of God. Very soon the church was too small to contain the multitudes which sought admission; so the happy pastor was forced to ask his parishioners to build a more spacious and a more magnificent edifice. It is still in existence today; an appropriate monument to the faith and love of the people for our Savior in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

3. The special object, however, of Father Olier's zeal was the celebration of the holy mysteries, the administering of the sacraments, the chanting of the offices, the ceremonies and the punctual performance of all the services of the Church. He wished everything to be done not only with order and dignity, but also with piety and edification. "One of the most cherished desires of my heart" said he, "is to have a church perfectly regulated, furnished and served. It would be a model to others, and an incentive to ecclesiastics to establish the same order in their own parishes." He was so zealous and persevering, he obtained such efficacious assistance,

and God so blessed his work that he lived to see this cherished desire fulfilled. All abuses disappeared. The sanctuary or choir was reserved for the clergy and the sacristan was always an ecclesiastic. The singers who had not received tonsure were prohibited from wearing the surplice. Rules were drawn up to acquaint those employed in the church with the esteem which they ought to have for their duties and the manner of performing them. In a word this saintly pastor inspired his clergy and parishioners with such devotion that it was admired and praised by all who witnessed it.

THIRD POINT. You see how important it is to receive and preserve the spirit of Minor Orders; particularly the spirit of religion. Promise our Lord that you will foster this spirit and that you will never neglect anything which would honor His presence in the Blessed Sacrament. In showing respect to His House we not only honor Him but we also make His greatness known. Do everything in your power that His sanctuaries may be worthy of Him. Love to decorate and enrich them. But remember, however, that the most essential ornaments of the holy

place, and those without which the others are of little value, are the numbers of His faithful adorers and the modesty of His sacred ministers. Nothing is more edifying than to see a holy priest recollected before God or prostrate in His presence. Nothing consoles, nothing edifies more than to see many laymen flocking to the holy table, anxious to hear the Word of God, or, in union with their pastor, adoring the Divine Victim. On the contrary, an empty church howsoever beautifully decorated will always be cold: no precious vestment will uplift souls to God, if the priest who wears it appears to be unspiritual and animated only with human sentiments. As a means to preserve the spirit of religion and the spirit of the priesthood, you will do well to read the life of the works of Father Olier.[1]

[1] *The Life of J. J. Olier*, by Edward H. Thompson, M.A., 1885 (Burns and Oates).

SECTION 3.

THE ORDER OF LECTOR

MEDITATION XVIII.

ON HOW OUR SAVIOR PERFORMED THE DUTIES OF THE LECTOR.

First Point. The Doctors of the Church remark that the Son of God, to honor the office of the Lector, deigned to fulfil its duties: *Hoc officium in propria persona ostendit, quando librum Isaiæ prophetæ aperiens, distincte ad intelligendum legit: Spiritus Domini super me.* (Yvo Carn.) Here we see Him performing the duties of the Lector. In the assembly of the faithful He receives the book containing the official readings: *Traditus est ei liber.* He arises, that all may hear the Word: *Surrexit legere.* Then having applied to Himself the passage which He had just read, He points out how exactly the prophecy is fulfilled in His person: *Cœpit dicere ad illos quia hodie impleta est hæc scriptura.* (Luke, iv, 21.) Adore this divine Master teaching you how to perform your duties and how to merit the grace to fulfil them well.

Ask Him to give you a share in the virtues of humility, devotion and zeal which He has prepared for you.

Second Point. Consider what you must imitate in the example of the Divine Master:

1. *His Modesty.* Our Savior performed the duties of the Lector, not through self-love, not to attract attention, not that He might appear superior to others, not to excite their admiration. His manner of acting was an expression of His deep religion as well as of His modesty. He stood, according to custom, out of respect for the Word of God. If He took advantage of this occasion to proclaim His divine mission, His only motive was—as in all his actions—to accomplish His Father's will and to teach souls the way of salvation. Such ought to be the dispositions of the Lector when he reads or when he chants in the church. Far from exalting himself inwardly when he is in the sanctuary, far from indulging in vanity, he ought to humble himself and to be confounded by his unworthiness: *Ideo dum legitis, in alto loco stetis, figurantes positione corporali vos in alto virtutum gradu debere conversari quatenus cunctis cælestis vitæ formam præbeatis.* (Pontif.)

2. *His application to the words read.* Our Lord

impressed his hearers because He Himself had reflected on, and had given His entire attention to the words which He spoke. As the Evangelist says: "*The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.*" (LUKE, IV, 29.) Do likewise if you wish your reading or singing to bear fruit: *Qui legit intelligat.* (MATTH, XXII, 15.) Realize what you read, what you speak or what you sing. *Ponite in cordibus vestris sermones istos.* (LUKE, IX, 44.) If you do this your words will undoubtedly affect your hearers. All will not understand the Latin words but every one will feel that you understand what you say or sing if your own heart is fixed upon it. There is a note of piety, of devotion and of conviction which even the uneducated perceive, yes even they can easily tell from his reading or singing a pious ecclesiastic from a lax or an indifferent one.

3. *His coming to practical and salutary conclusions.* When our Savior had read the passage from Isaias He concluded that the time appointed for the salvation of the world was at hand; that all the Messianic prophecies were about to be fulfilled. He showed that His mission was to evangelize the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to obtain liberty for

captives and pardon for sinners. He made His hearers feel that it was their duty to hearken to His words, to put aside their prejudices and to profit by the graces heaven was offering them: *Cœpit dicere ad illos: Hodie impleta est scriptura in auribus vestris.* (Luke, iv, 21) Thus ought you to profit by these words both for your own salvation and for that of others; because the chief care here below, the supreme concern of all Christians and one of the principal duties of God's ministers is the salvation of souls. Holy Scripture was given us for no other purpose: *Altiora te ne quæsieris et fortiora te ne scrutatus fueris; sed quæ præcepit tibi Deus, illa cogita semper.* (Eccli., iii, 22.)

Third Point. Examine how and with what disposition you read Holy Scripture both in private and in public. Is it with humility, respect and attention? Is it for your own spiritual advantage as well as for that of your neighbor? *Ut sanctificeris et sanctifices.* Do you not rather seek to satisfy your curiosity or your self-love? Reflect, that the Word of God is a norm, a judge, for him who preaches it as well as for those who hear it, if it were enough to know it in order to be a saint, many heretics would

have been saints. In fact no one would be holier than the Devil, since no Doctor knows the Scriptures as well as he: *Si quis audierit verba mea et non custodierit, sermo quem locutus sum, ille judicabit eum in novissimo die.* (JOAN, XII, 48.)

Mother Mary of the Incarnation, who established the Ursulines in Canada, had an extraordinary love and respect for Word of God. "I can imagine nothing greater," said she, "than to be the mouth-piece of this divine Word. Having learned from my infancy that God speaks through the mouth of His preachers, I had for them such reverence that I would have kissed their footprints."

MEDITATION XIX.

ON THE ESTEEM WHICH THE CHURCH SHOWS FOR THE WORD OF GOD.

FIRST POINT. Adore God requiring for His Word the most profound attention and the most religious respect. He wishes the heavens to be silent and the earth to be attentive so as not to lose a particle of it: *Audite, cœli, quæ loquor et auribus percipe terra, quoniam Dominus locutus est.* (ISAIAS, I.) The greatest of the prophets realized how unworthy he

was to proclaim the divine oracles, and the Lord having made him the mouth-piece of His Spirit ordered a Seraph to purify his lips with the fire of the altar: *Ecce tetigit hoc labia tua et peccatum tuum mundabitur.* (Isaias, xi, 7.) The Church leaves nothing undone to inspire her ministers with the same esteem for the Word of God. Next to our Savior's Sacred Body His Word is the object of her deepest veneration. The Deacon never sings the Gospel nor does the Priest ever read it, without having asked God for a share in Isaias' fervor: *Munda cor meum ac labia mea, omnipotens Deus, qui labia Isaiæ prophetæ calculo mundasti ignito.* (Missal.) Beg the Holy Ghost to give you the respect and the esteem which the Divine Word demands.

Second Point. Consider the marks of respect and esteem which the Church shows for the Word of God.

1. *She has ministers for the Word of God as well as ministers for the Holy Eucharist.* Many are the duties of the former. They preach the Word of God to the people, teach its dogmas and inculcate its precepts: *Sacerdotem oportet prædicare.* The Deacon chants the text and may even assist the

Priest in preaching: *Accipite potestatem legendi evangelium in ecclesia Dei.* The Sub-deacon receives the power of reading the Epistles: *Accipite librum epistolarum.* Ostiaries and Lectors must guard the sacred books or chant certain passages of the Old Testament included in the divine office: *Lectorem siquidem oportet legere ei qui prædicat et lectiones cantare.* (PONTIF.) It is the order to be found among those who are ministers of the Holy Eucharist. The priest consecrates it, the deacon may distribute it, the sub-deacon prepares the bread and wine to be consecrated. This analogy explains and justifies the comparison which Doctors and saints have often made between the Word of God and the Sacrament of the Altar: *Non minus est verbum Dei quam corpus Christi.* (ST. AUGUSTINE.) *Par honor et decus utrique.* (FR. OLIER.)

2. *The Church requires her ministers to give the highest honors to the Word of God.* We can easily see at Mass what respect the deacon shows for the Gospels and the sub-deacon shows for the Epistles. During the ordination when the Church confides to the lector the Old Testament, she requires him to touch the Book as a sacred object not to be entrusted

to all indiscriminately: *Accipite et estote verbi Dei relatores.* She enjoins him to read it correctly, intelligently and modestly: so as to edify the people: *Studete verba Dei distincte et aperte, ad intelligentiam et ædificationem fidelium, absque mendacio proferre.* Moreover she offers magnificent promises to those who acquit themselves of this function worthily: *Habituri, si fideliter et utiliter impleveritis ministerium vestrum, partem cum iis qui bene administraverunt ab initio.* (PONTIF.) Does she not thus show both the esteem which she has for the Word of God, and the fruit which she hopes that we will derive from it?

3. *The Church asks God to bestow precious graces on Lectors that they may fulfill their duties in a holy and edifying manner.* To convince you of this you have but to read the prayers of the Pontifical: *Oremus, fratres carissimi, Deum Patrem omnipotentem, ut super hos famulos suos . . . . benedictionem suam clementer effundat, quatenus distincte legant et eadem operibus impleant. . . . . Ut assiduitate lectionum instructi sint atque ordinati, ut sanctæ Ecclesiæ exemplo sanctitatis suæ consulant.* If the least duty, pertinent to the Word of God, is of such importance, if, to accomplish it well. we need

a special vocation and particular graces, what must be its excellence and what ought to be our respect for it?

THIRD POINT. Foster in your soul the highest esteem and the most religious respect for the Holy Books. Accustom yourself to read them with devotion and docility, saying to yourself what the angel said to St. John: *Hæc verba fidelissima sunt et vera.* Consider it a grace to love and to understand well these divine oracles. Make it a rule to read a chapter of the New Testament every day and to meditate on its contents with the same dispositions as the early Christians, namely: faith, humility and love: *Non ut verbum hominum, sed sicut est vere, verbum Dei.* (I THESS., II, 13.)

"Our Savior," said Father Olier, "showed me the great interior and exterior respect which he wished our seminarists to have for the Word of God. The Holy Scripture is a ciborium in which God has been pleased to hide himself in order to enlighten and to nourish the Church." Thus the Bible always had the most honorable place in Father Olier's library, and he never read it without having said a prayer beforehand.

MEDITATION XX.

HOW THE CHURCH DESIRES THAT HER CLERGY SHOULD BE WELL VERSED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

First Point. Let us adore Our Divine Lord, inspiring His Apostles with great esteem for the Word of God and for all Scriptural science. This is the only study He recommends to them and He rebukes the Pharisees for not having cultivated it: *Scrutamini Scripturas.* (John, v, 39.) *Erratis, nescientes Scripturas.* (Matt., xxii, 29.) He teaches His disciples to seek light and consolation in the Holy Books: *Incipiens a Moyse, interpretabatur illis quæ de ipso erant.* (Luke, xxiv, 27.) To encourage them He unraveled the hidden meaning of the texts: *Aperuit illis sensum ut intelligerent Scripturas.* (Luke, xxiv, 45.) Ask our Divine Savior for a share in these graces and beg Him to make you love His divine lessons: *Beatus quem erudieris, Domine.* (Ps. xciii, 12.)

Second Point. Consider how faithfully the Church follows this example and how carefully she recommends the study of Scripture to her clergy from their seminary days.

1. *She places the Sacred Books in their hands.* She does this, not only as a treasure which they must guard and as food for their nourishment, but also as the source of the doctrine they must teach and consequently know full well: *Accipite et estote verbi Dei relatores.* Do not these words of the Bishop to the lector recall those which our Savior addressed to His Apostles when He gave them the Holy Eucharist: *Accipite et comedite?* Do they not resemble God's command to the Prophet Ezechiel: *Comede volumen istud et vadens loquere ad filios Israel.* (III, 1); words thus interpreted by Gregory the Great: *Comede et pasce; saturare et eructa; accipe et sparge?* Finally the lector must not only guard the inspired text but he must also announce it intelligently and assist the faithful to understand it. "*Doctor et lector unum sunt,*" said Amalarius. Moreover when the Church ordains a lector she wishes to prepare him for preaching, to make of him another Timothy, *enutritus verbis fidei et bonæ doctrinæ.* (I TIM., IV, 6.)

2. *She urges clerics to apply themselves faithfully to this study.* She wishes that by attentive and assiduous reading, *assiduitate lectionum,* her ministers should become so familiar with the text that

they should not hesitate when they meet a rare phrase or a difficult construction in their public explanations: *Qui ad Lectoris provehitur gradum,* said a council quoting St. Isidore of Seville, *erit doctrina et libris imbutus, sensumque ac verborum scientia perornatus, ita ut distinctionem sententiarum intelligat.* How can they acquire this knowledge and training without attentive and patient study? The Bishop insists upon this during the ordinations; *Studete igitur verba Dei distincte et aperte absque mendacio falsitatis proferre . . . . quatenus auditores vestros docere possitis.* (Pontif.) As if he said: *Disce quod doceas; Obtine eum qui secundum doctrinan est fidelem sermonem, ut potens sis exhortari in doctrina sana.* (St. Jerome.)

3. *She begs of God those graces which her ministers need to persevere in their studies.* She pleads particularly for the love of edifying books; for the application, without which we can not grasp the meaning of a difficult text, for the purity of intention which considers only the Church's interest, and for fidelity to advance in virtue and to enable the faithful to do so: *Ut assiduitate lectionum instructi atque ordinati et agenda dicant et dicta opere compleant,*

et in utroque sanctæ Ecclesiæ consulant. (PONTIF.) Meditate on this prayer and repeat it often from the depths of your soul, as it is very important that you possess its fruits: *Quod in vobis Deus impleat per gratiam suam.* (PONTIF.)

THIRD POINT. If you have great esteem and a strong attraction for Holy Scripture, thank God. If you have not these dispositions, beg Him for them as a most precious gift: *Qui ex Deo est verba Dei audit,* says our Savior. (ST. JOHN, VIII, 47.) Every child of God should love His Word, but it ought to be a priest's delight. In it he should find his light, strength, consolations and even his life. *In carcere corporis hujus detentus, duobus me egere fateor, cibo scilicet et lumine. Dedisti itaque mihi, Domine, sacrum corpus tuum ad refectionem mentis et corporis et posuisti lucernam pedibus meis verbum tuum. Hæc possunt dici mensæ duæ, hinc et inde in gazophylacio sanctæ Ecclesiæ positæ.* (IMIT., IV, XI, 4.) Such are your needs and such ought to be your desires. In nourishing yourself with a two-fold food you would increase in wisdom and virtue; you would gradually acquire the spirit, the thoughts, and the dispositions fitting a

representative of Jesus Christ and you would be preparing to exercise His ministry with abundant fruit.

"I do not flatter myself that I know and understand everything in Holy Scripture," said St. Jerome, "I do not pretend to be able to cull all the fruit from a tree whose roots even are in heaven, but I affirm that this is my desire: *Non sum iam petulans et hebes ut eorum fructus in terra capere pollicear quorum radices in cælo fixæ sunt, sed velle fateor. Discamus in terris quorum nobis scientia perseverat in cælo.* (Epis. ad St. Paulin, liii.)

MEDITATION XXI.

HOW USEFUL HOLY SCRIPTURE IS TO THE PRIEST.

First Point. Let us adore the Holy Spirit instructing us through the Pastoral Epistles of the Great Apostle, and, in particular, bidding younger ecclesiastics, such as were Titus and Timothy, to study the Holy Books: *Attendite lectioni.* (I Tim., iv, 13.) Strengthen yourself in the true doctrine and recall from whom and how you have received it: *Permane in iis quæ didicisti, sciens a quo didiceris, et quia ab infantia sacras litteras nosti quæ te possunt instruere ad salutem.* (II Tim., iii, 15.) A pastor

should maintain true doctrine, know how to speak the language of faith, how to exhort and rebuke in a proper way: *Oportet Episcopum esse amplectentem eum qui secundum doctrinam est fidelem sermonem ut potens sit exhortari et arguere.* (Tit., i, 9.) These advantages we derive from a knowledge of Scripture: it proves and defends dogmas, combats vice and teaches virtue: *Omnis Scriptura divinitus inspirata est utilis ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudiendum in omni justitia, ut perfectus sis homo Dei.* (II Tim., iii, 16.) Accept this advice as addressed to you and ask the Holy Ghost to give you the grace to practice it.

Second Point. Reflect on the four fruits derived from a knowledge of Scripture or on the four ends for which the Holy Books were given us.

1. *To teach.* It enables us to know and to communicate the true doctrine to others. To teach the Christian doctrine with exactness and authority, we must know not only the revealed truths but even the very words of the inspired writers. Identity of expression guarantees that of doctrine. Besides there is in the language of Holy Scripture a power and an unction which human words have not. It

is a combination of authority and sweetness which has an incomparable power to subdue proud spirits and to touch cold hearts: *Numquid non verba mea sunt quasi ignis, dicit Dominus, et quasi malleus conterens petram?* (JER., XXIII, 29.)

2. *To reprove.* Besides teaching truth we must know how to defend it. Many arguments which heretics advance against the Church's doctrine are drawn from Scripture; that is to say, they have their source in the obscuration or the false interpretation of some passage. Thus to refute them effectively and to justify our belief in these truths we should be able to grasp the true meaning of every text, to reconcile those which appear contradictory, to justify those which are repugnant to the ideas of the world or the prejudices of the learned; to distinguish true readings from false ones, good translations from those that are bad; in a word to possess a profound and ready knowledge of the Old as well as of the New Testament. He who will have studied Holy Scripture with great care will be able to defend the Church's doctrine most successfully and will force all to respect it. Such was Apollos of whom St. Luke writes: *Vir eloquens, potens in scripturis, multum-*

que contulit his qui crediderunt: vehementer enim Judæos revincebat, publice ostendens per scripturas esse Christum Jesum. (ACT., XVIII, 27.)

3. *To correct.* If true zeal prompts us to defend truth it will also encourage us to combat abuses and to suppress vice. Holy Scripture is particularly useful when we quote it against sinners. They refuse to be corrected by a man, imperfect like themselves; but if they believe in God they will not question His right to judge, to reprove, to punish them. They are forced to submit to His authority and to His justice. If, then, sinners or sin must be denounced let it be, as much as possible, in the words of God: *Si quis loquitur, quasi sermones Dei.* (I PETER, IV, 11.) *Sermo presbyteri sermone Dei sit conditus.* (ST. JEROME.) There is in the Word of God an infallibility, a sanctity and an authority which quells all revolt, a paternal accent which softens reproaches and an unction of charity which heals the injuries it inflicts: *Lex Domini immaculata, convertens animas: præceptum Domini lucidum, illuminans oculos.* (PS. XVIII, 8.)

4. *To instruct unto justice.* To establish us in virtue as well as to conquer vice the Word of God

has incomparable power. A text from Scripture, says an experienced preacher, Father Lejeune, makes a greater impression on the faithful than all human considerations: *Vivus est sermo Dei et efficax, penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti et pertingens usque ad divisionem animæ ac spiritus.* (HEB., IV, 12.) Each revealed Word is a Word of eternal life. Quickened by the Holy Spirit Who dictated it, it possesses a supernatural light and a flame of charity which enlightens, animates and sanctifies. How important is it then to make these maxims known to the faithful! What harm do those do who replace the Word of God by the cold, abstract and powerless language of human wisdom!

THIRD POINT. Since the study of Holy Scripture is so important for the priest, resolve to cultivate it with care: *Divinas Scripturas sæpius lege; imo nunquam de tuis manibus sacra lectio deponatur. Disce quod doceas: obtine eum qui secundum doctrinam est fidelem sermonem, ut potens sis exhortari in doctrina sana et eos qui contradicunt revincere.* (ST. JEROME.) The more often you meditate on the Word of God the more will you admire its wisdom and the greater fruit will you derive from it. Never let a day pass

without reading a chapter and always observe the rule which a doctor of the fourth century has left us: *Quotidiana Scripturæ lectione infundat oleum sensui suo, et paret menti lucernam quæ, juxta præceptum Evangelii, luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt.* (Theoph. Alex.) This is the best way of becoming a man of God and an organ worthy of the Holy Spirit: *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei ad omne opus bonum instructus.* (II Tim., iii, 17.) Fr. Baudouin, of the diocese of Luçon, whose canonization is being considered, wrote to a pastor during the first part of the last century: "Be provident of your time. Study Holy Scripture. A priest, who reads the Epistles of St. Paul often, as if they were addressed to him, will become a Timothy, a Titus, an Apollos." Again to a friend of his from Argenteuil, who was a superior of a preparatory seminary which had just been burned he wrote: "Happily the evils of this world are never complete. You have seen your home burn as David's when he was fighting for Achis; but you have saved what was most dear to you, namely, the Gospels and the other writings of the New Testament, both of which you will find wherever you go."

MEDITATION XXII.

ON OTHER ECCLESIASTICAL STUDIES.

First Point. Let us adore the Spirit of God inspiring His ministers with a high esteem for sacred studies and for all sacerdotal learning: *Scientiam Dei volui plus quam holocausta.* (Osee, vi, 6.) The Church expresses the Will of her founder in every possible way. She honors in an especial manner those priests who are distinguished for their talent and learning: *Qui laborant verbo et doctrina.* (I. Tim., v, 17.) During their life she confides to their care her most important charges, and, after their death, if they have merited public honors by their eminent sanctity as well as by their scholarly attainments, she bestows upon them special titles, calling them her fathers and doctors. Moreover she imposes a strict obligation upon all the members of the clergy to apply themselves assiduously to the studies of their state. After the essential practices of sanctification, her Councils have recommended nothing more often and more clearly. Wherefore the Bishop addresses those about to be ordained lectors: *Assiduitate lectionum instructi sint et ordinati.* Recall this obligation and accept it cheerfully for the service of the sovereign Master. Ask Him

to give you the attraction, the facility and the courage necessary to perform this duty well.

SECOND POINT. In order to appreciate the importance of your ecclesiastical studies and to encourage you to undertake them with zeal, reflect on the three following considerations.

1. Sacred learning, a solid and extensive knowledge not only of the Bible and theology but even of canon law, liturgy and spiritual authors is necessary for the clergy that they may instruct the faithful and direct individual souls. *Euntes docete omnes gentes servare omnia quæcumque mandavi vobis.* (ST. MATTHEW, XXVIII, 19.) The first duty of the priest, then, is to teach, to conduct the faithful in the way of salvation. But to teach, he must know; to conduct he must see: *Si cæcus cæco ducatum præstat, ambo in foveam cadunt.* (ST. MATTHEW, XV, 14.) Thus the Master began His instructions to His apostles by telling them that they were the light of the world: *Lux mundi; lucerna super candelabrum, ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt.* (ST. MATTHEW, V, 14.) It is evident that these words suppose in the clergy knowledge of what pertains to salvation, that they may be able to dispel prejudices and to instruct the ignorant. Who can imagine the peril

of souls, if they were to be deprived of this instruction? *Quid enim periculi sit ubi non invenit pastor pascua, ignorat dux itineris viam, vicarius nescit domini sui voluntatem, Ecclesia quotidie multipliciter experitur.* (St. Bernard.)

2. With clergymen, as with others, one's learning corresponds to one's application, to one's study: *Antequam loquaris, disce.* (Eccli., xviii, 19.) Religious science demands labor and patience. "Very few know Christianity well enough to teach it well," says Fenelon. It is true that God could give knowledge without requiring work. He gave, thus, the lights of His Spirit to His Apostles and to other holy priests; but He did so only because they did not have the advantages of study or because He wished to prove that they were envoys of heaven and organs of His doctrine. But such is not, and never will be, His ordinary way of acting. He did not refuse His gifts to those who were in need of them to procure His glory; yet He will not be so prodigal of them as to encourage laziness. It is, then, a fixed principle founded on reason and experience, that if we wish to know we must study; if we wish to teach we must know: *Disce quod doceas; ne prius magister sis quam discipulus.* (St. Jerome.)

3. If an ecclesiastic does not apply himself to his studies when he is young, he will never be learned. In the first place, he can never regain the knowledge lost by wasting the early years of his ministry: *Quæ in juventute tua non congregasti, quomodo in senectute invenies?* (Eccli., xxv, 5.) Secondly, he will forget how to learn: for the habit of idleness destroys and even removes all aptitude for study. As the intellect is developed by work, so it is weakened by indolence. *Est tempus acquirendi et tempus perdendi.* (Eccli., iii, 16.) How many ecclesiastics in their old age deplore the sloth and dissipation of their youth? They feel that for the lack of learning they have done but little of what they should have accomplished. They fear that at times they have failed in their duty, either through error or ignorance: and they realize that they have become almost incapable of learning or retaining anything. Be prudent then, and spare yourself these regrets: *Quodcumque facere potest manus tua, instanter operare, quia nec opus, nec ratio, nec scientia erunt apud inferos quo tu properas.* (Eccli., ix., 10.)

Third Point. Be on your guard against any inclination to lose your time, either by working in a lazy manner, or by giving your attention to other studies

than those which you are obliged to cultivate. Leave aside what is frivolous, profane and superfluous. Apply yourself to that which you will need in exercising the Sacred Ministry. You should not be stranger in those branches of knowledge which every educated man must possess to some extent, but what you must acquire in an eminent degree, what men will expect to find in you is the science of religion; that is, of the dogmas to be believed and of their proofs; of the duties to be fulfilled and of the way which leads to salvation: *Hæc meditare; in his esto: hoc enim faciens, et teipsum salvum facies et eos qui te audiunt.* (I Tim., iv, 15, 16.)

A fervent Christian, an eminent physician, whose life has been recently published, wrote to one of his sons who had entered the Seminary: "I have no doubt but that you find great satisfaction in your studies and that each day they infuse more light into your soul. Consider that you are to be a theologian, that is, you are to know how to speak of God and holy things. I recall very often the words of Solomon to the effect that the educated man differs from the ignorant as light from darkness: *Quantum differt lux a tenebris.*" (Eccli., ii, 13.)

MEDITATION XXIII.

HOW STUDY CONTRIBUTES TO THE FORMATION OF ECCLESIASTICS.

First Point. Adore the Holy Spirit inspiring the clergy with esteem for sacred sciences and giving to all who are called to the priesthood desire for the studies of their state. This inclination has been manifested from the time of the Apostles, at a time when the exterior ministry would seem to require all the zeal of God's ministers. *Dum venio, attendite lectioni,* said St. Paul to his disciple; *in his esto.* (I Tim., iv, 13, 15.) A little later when he was preparing for martyrdom, he wrote: *Marcum assume, et veniens affer libros, maxime autem membranas.* (II Tim., iv, 13.) From the first, then, the Church has promoted the cultivation of the sacred sciences; and in our own times the Sovereign Pontiffs and Bishops often recommend them to the clergy. Beg our Saviour to make you realize their importance, and to give you a high esteem and a great love for them.

Second Point. Nothing will be of more benefit to you than to apply yourself, when young, to the studies of your state.

1. *To develop your mind and to strengthen your faculties.* If you do not take physical exercise, how can you be strong and supple? If we do not exercise the faculties of our soul, and particularly those of our intellect, they instead of acquiring strength will become weaker and never be fit to do any serious work: *Otiositas inimica est animæ. Si non legeris, si non studueris, dormitabit anima tua præ tædio et hostes tui animæ tuæ sabbata deridebunt.* (Pet. Bles.) Our minds are developed only by careful exercise and constant efforts. Recall those ecclesiastics who have gained any influence by their talent, knowledge and works. Observe those of today who serve the Church most faithfully; who fulfil her offices with the greatest success. How did they form their minds? By work or by repose? Did they not begin by devoting themselves to study, to a serious, patient and constant study of the sciences pertinent to their state. Do they not owe to this labor the success which they have gained and the superiority which we recognize in them?

2. *To acquire the spirit of your vocation.* Is it not natural for us to become imbued with the sentiments of those with whom we converse or with whom we live? When studying the sacred sciences are we not

associated with the Doctors, the Fathers and other ecclesisatical writers, that is to say with those ecclesiastics renowned both for their learning and sanctity? What results can we expect from such associates? Undoubtedly we will acquire those virtues for which they are distinguished, namely: a lively faith, universal charity, burning zeal, cheerful generosity, absolute disinterestedness; in a word Christian Wisdom. *Qui cum sapientibus graditur, sapiens erit.* (PROV., XIII, 20.) The reverse will happen if we neglect our studies, if we spend our time with people of the world. Forced to live with them we will speak their language, imbibe their ideas, their sentiments, and finally we will become animated with their spirit: *Amicus stultorum similis efficietur* (ibid.). If, indeed, to avoid weariness, we take up profane studies, literature, natural sciences, etc., our intellect will not be darkened, but what danger is there not of forgetting the maxims of faith, of losing a taste for piety, of being engulfed by that proud, selfish and barren curiosity which forms the character of the worldly scholar? *Vinum sæcularis scientiæ inebrians, sed curiositate, non caritate, implens, non nutriens, inflans non ædificans, ingurgitans et non confortans.* (ST. BERNARD.)

3. *That your instructions and sermons may be fruitful.* One of the priest's most important duties is to teach the faithful all the truths of Christianity and one of the most precious graces that God can bestow upon a people is to place over them pastors who will be zealous and exact in instructing them: *Dabo vobis pastores juxta cor meum qui pascent vos scientia et doctrina*; said He when He blessed His people. Such will be the ecclesiastic who will have usefully employed all the time of his Seminary course and who will have continued to cultivate his mind and heart with useful study. His knowledge will enable him to enlighten and sanctify souls by speaking from the abundance of his heart. *Omnis scriba doctus in regno cœlorum similis est patrifamilias qui profert de thesauro suo nova et vetera.* (MATTH., XII, 35.) *In scientia sua justificabit ipse justus servus meus multos.* (Is., LIII, 10.) But how can he who has neglected his studies teach? Such a man will have only superficial notions. On many occasions he will have to be silent or he will feed his flock on food that is not nutritious, which is even injurious.

THIRD POINT. Take a serious resolution not to waste any time which you should devote to your

studies. Be convinced that without a correct and extensive knowledge of theology and of the lives of the saints your ministry will not be successful. The more you are penetrated with Christian truth the more service will you render to God and to souls. With clergymen, as with others, the labor of youth promises abundant and precious fruit for old age. On the contrary, if our early years are spent in idleness and frivolity we can expect from the future only desolation and barrenness: *Per agrum hominis pigri transivi et per vineam viri stulti, et ecce totum repleverant urticæ. Quod cum vidissem, posui in corde meo, et exemplo didici disciplinam.* (PROV., XXIV, 32.)

When St. John of Matha entered the University of Paris he was so struck by the difficulties which ecclesiastical studies offered him that he hesitated before undertaking them. But one day during prayer, after he had offered himself to God to accomplish His will, he heard these words of the book of Proverbs three times: *Stude sapientiæ, fili mi, et lætifica cor meum.* (XXVII, 11.) Immediately his doubts were solved and he began his studies with an ardor which was never diminished.

MEDITATION XXIV.

THE INFLUENCE OF ECCLESIASTICAL STUDIES ON THE HOLY MINISTRY.

First Point. Admire the wisdom and goodness of God's Will in His dealings with you. When He chose you to be a representative of His Son and the mouth-piece of His Spirit in His Church, He wished that your ministry should be at the same time His work and yours; that your ministry should be a cause of merit for you and a source of blessings to others. Your success depends on grace and if you wish to have grace you must be prepared to work. You will reap only where you have sown. *Quæ seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.* (Gal., vi, 7.) *Et qui metit, mercedem accipit.* (John, vi, 36.) Submit yourself to this plan and acknowledge the wisdom of it. Since now is your time of laboring and sowing give yourself to it with all your heart. Be courageous and persevering in all your efforts and ask our Savior to give you those blessings which are necessary to make your work successful.

Second Point. A generous and constant application to your studies is a necessary condition for your success and at the same time a sure pledge of many blessings.

1. *It is a condition of success.* No study, no learning. Without serious and constant application there will be neither solid nor extensive learning. If there be not courageous and prolonged study of the ecclesiastical sciences, there will be no real priestly erudition. Such is the universal rule established by Providence: *Qui vult nucleum edere, frangat nucem.* (St. Jerome.) An ecclesiastic who has not a thorough knowledge of the studies belonging to his state should not hope to be a successful preacher; besides he will never be a prudent director or a true pastor of souls. He will be wanting in that essential quality which the bishop asks of God when he ordains the lector: *Ut assiduitate lectionum instructus sit et ordinatus.* Those who know him may have confidence in his good will, in his zeal and piety, but how can they depend on his instructions or regulate their life by his conduct? He himself, in doubt as to fundamental principles, a stranger to those questions with which the minds of enlightened men are occupied will realize the insufficiency of his equipment and thus will be forced to restrict his activity. At times he will arouse his hearers by an exhortation, but he will never gain control over their minds, nor will

he be able to influence their wills: *Si quis ignorat, ignorabitur.* (I Cor., xiv, 38.) *Imo,* adds St. Bernard, *multos ignorare faciet et ignorari.*

2. *It is at the same time a pledge of many blessings.* If a priest is not wanting in virtue, if his zeal is what it should be, the more conversant is he with his studies the more useful will he be and the greater fruit we may expect from his ministry. Observe how learned priests are welcomed and esteemed in the world. Birth, influence and dignities are not of much value today. One's talent and knowledge are always respected. They have more prestige than ever before. A priest who is superior to his confrères in this respect inspires confidence They consult him, seek his advice, and are proud of his friendship. Even non-Christians admire him. They dare not attack his religion in his presence and even the most impious respect his views when he is absent. Do you not realize that an enlightened priest, whose learning has been recognized and whose character has been tested, is sufficient to disarm prejudices and to suppress passions? Does not the word of a famous preacher or of an eloquent missionary strengthen the faith and reanimate the piety of an entire province? *Non ignoro,* said St. Bernard, *quantum*

Ecclesiæ profuerint et prosint litterati sui, sive ad refellendos qui ex adverso sunt, sive ad simplices instruendos. May God multiply such examples among us! *Quis mihi dabit homines litteratos et pios in ecclesiis Dei, si non in omnibus, certe in pluribus, certe in aliquibus saltem!* But how can such results be accomplished without work? Labor is required for knowledge as well as for sanctity.

THIRD POINT. To study, to apply yourself to the sciences of your state of life is to work for God and for souls; since in this manner you are preparing yourself to be a worthy minister, a capable and efficient workman: *operarium inconfusibilem.* (II TIM. II, 15.) If you have a priestly heart, this consideration alone will enable you to overcome all the dislike, all the difficulties which will confront you. See if this be your disposition. Has your zeal for work and your perseverance been what they should? The result of this examination will suggest suitable resolutions: *Qui parce seminat, parce et metet; et qui seminat in benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet.* (I COR., IX, 6.)

Aways remember this maxim of St. Gregory Nazianzen: *Oportet primum lux fieri, deinde cæteros illuminare.*

MEDITATION XXV.

HOW THE LOVE OF PIETY AND THE LOVE OF STUDY SHOULD BE UNITED IN AN ECCLESIASTIC.

First Point. Admire the lofty idea which Holy Scripture gives us of the God-Man and His ministers, when it designates them as the firmament of the Church or of the supernatural world. Jesus Christ is the sun of justice, the source of all light, fervor and even of life itself. His ministers are, as it were, stars of an inferior nature, without brightness or power of themselves, but brilliant with His light and inflamed with His fervor. Their mission is to enlighten and inflame the entire world. Such was the Precursor called by the divine Master, *lucerna ardens et lucens.* (St. John, v, 35.) The Church tells us that such was the mission of all the Doctors: *Quos lucere simul et ardere fecisti.* Ask our Lord that you may, like His Church, appreciate this mission, and do all you can to fulfil it: *Ut et agenda dicas et dicta opere compleas.* (Pontif.)

Second Point. Saint Bernard commenting on this eulogy of St. John the Baptist: *lucerna ardens et lucens,* has left us an excellent passage upon which you would do well to meditate frequently: *Est enim*

lucere vanum, ardere parum, lucere atque ardere perfectum.

1. *Lucere vanum.* To be learned, to be endowed with a remarkable intellect and wonderful talent, is not sufficient to render profitable service to the Church. In such a ministry as that of the clergy, in a supernatural work which grace alone can make fruitful, mere learning is useless, and even worse than useless; because, far from being conducive to our end, it would inspire us with vain complaisance and fleeting illusions. This is what the Apostle wished to express by the phrase *Scientia inflat.* (I Cor., viii, 1.) Learning of itself tends to pride, to self-sufficiency. It exaggerates its ability and endeavors to be esteemed in the minds of others, thereby rejecting grace which alone can make it profitable. With how many examples could we not verify this saying of St. Bernard: *Montes Gelboe, super quos nec ros nec pluvia descendit!*

2. *Ardere parum.* Even the most fervent piety, if unaccompanied by other qualities, will not suffice for a successful ministry. Since he was ordained to teach truth and to oppose error, the priest must instruct and direct the faithful. Being always pre-

pared to separate truth from error, justice from injustice, counsel from command, he should possess a knowledge of dogma, ethics and discipline correct and extensive: *Sacerdotis est scire legem et ad interrogationem respondere de lege. Si sacerdos est, sciat legem Domini. Si ignorat legem, ipse se arguit non esse sacerdotem.* (St. Jerome.) It is undoubtedly true that during the first centuries of the Christian era there were many unlearned men who accomplished much for the Church; the Spirit of God supplied the knowledge which they lacked. Even though they had not studied they were more enlightened than the world's scholars. When they spoke on matters of faith, the proper object of their preaching, their knowledge was more accurate and extensive: *Sapientia et fortitudo Domini sunt; ipse dat sapientiam sapientibus et scientiam intelligentibus disciplinam.* (Dan., II, 1.) God did this however owing to the circumstances of the time. Can we imagine that he would encourage our laziness by conferring the same favor upon us?

3. *Lucere simul et ardere perfectum.* Piety united with learning, virtue combined with science, is what will make an ecclesiastic perfect. If one of these

is wanting, he is not only at fault, but he is in peril: *Quid facit eruditio sine caritate? Inflat. Et quid absque eruditione dilectio? Errat.* (St. Bernard.) On the contrary, when talent is at the service of charity, when science is accompanied by zeal, and grace elevates all, we can think of nothing more capable of promoting the glory of God and of securing the salvation of souls. This is why St. Paul thus addressed Timothy: *Attende tibi et doctrinæ; hoc enim faciens, et teipsum salvum facies et eos qui te audiunt.* (I Tim., iv, 16.)

Third Point. According to Father Olier one can distinguish three specific sciences: The first, purely human, which is acquired by natural means; such is that of worldlings who, when they study, think only of themselves, and count only on themselves. The second is purely divine or infused science; this God, as the author of all supernatural gifts, communicates to whom he pleases. The apostles and many saints were the recipients of this favor. The third is Christian knowledge, the result of grace and continual efforts. This is exemplified by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. If you wish to glorify God and to save souls follow their example. Study

always with care, as a man who realizes how much he needs the help of God, both to learn and to teach. Study always in a spirit of prayer, realizing God's presence and your dependence upon Him. In this way you will advance equally in piety and learning, and you will become, according to St. Augustine, *et pie doctus, et scienter pius.*

The blessed Autbert Abbot of the Benedictine Order in Italy, often recited the following prayer: O Lord teach me piety and knowledge: *Disciplinam et scientiam doce me.* But if I may not be at the same time learned and pious let me be ignorant all my life. Remember that I have not left my home and my parents to become learned but to secure the salvation of my soul by practising virtue.

MEDITATION XXVI.

ON STUDYING ECCLESIASTICAL CHANT.

First Point. God has, at all times, commanded His saints and ministers to chant His praises. *Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes tuæ* (Ps. cxviii, 54), says David to the Lord. The Holy Spirit has called him *egregius psaltes Domini,* the most excel-

lent singer of the divine perfections. (II Reg., xxiii, 1.) *Cantabo Domino*, he exclaims, *et psallam nomini Domini altissimi.* (Ps. xii, 6.) *Immolavi in tabernaculo ejus hostiam vociferationis.* (Ps. xxvi, 6.) This holy king, not satisfied with singing himself the praises of God, ordered the psalms and canticles to be sung in the temple during the sacrifices: *Stare fecit cantores contra altare et dedit in celebrationibus decus, ut laudarent nomen Domini et amplificarent mane sanctitatem.* (Eccli., xlviii, 21.) The apostles transmitted and recommended to all Christians this practice of the Old Law, and the Church has prescribed it as one of the principal parts of her worship. Ask the Holy Spirit, Who inspires the faithful with love and esteem for sacred music, to give you a taste for it and to make you capable of rendering it worthily in the holy offices.

Second Point. *Consider the principle motives why you should study ecclesiastical chant:*

1. *Out of respect for authority.* All those who have at heart the education of the clergy: the sovereign pontiffs, bishops, founders of religious orders, rectors of seminaries, holy priests of all ages, have enforced this study. The Council of Trent expressly mentions

this branch among those to which aspirants to the priesthood should apply themselves: *Cantus disciplinam discant.* Is this not enough to convince a prudent mind and to determine a docile spirit to learn sacred music? *Non judices contra judicem, quoniam secundum quod justum est judicat.* (Eccli., viii, 17.) *Manifestum est quod quicumque negligat habere vel facere id quod tenetur, peccat peccato omissionis.* (St. Thom.)

2. *The glory of God.* God's glory demands that the holy offices should be celebrated in a manner worthy of the divine mysteries. Chanting is one of the essential elements in these offices. Executed well, it helps to raise up the soul to God. It expresses religious feelings and fosters the spirit of prayer: *Psalmistarum cantibus ad affectum Dei mentes audientium excitantur.* (St. Isid.) Badly executed it distracts, fatigues, and even keeps the faithful away from Church.

3. *The piety of the faithful.* Nothing edifies more, nothing inspires a greater respect for religion and holy things, nothing attracts them to the ceremonies of the Church more than to see the mysteries celebrated in a befitting manner and to hear the chant

rendered perfectly, particularly by those whose dignity, talent and age command the respect of the congregation: *novimus distinctionem gravitatemque psallentium etiam astantibus multum attulisse fervoris.* (CASSIAN.) "What tears," says St. Augustine, in his Confessions, "did I not shed when I heard the hymns and the canticles sung in perfect harmony in the church of Milan? As those sounds reached my ears truth penetrated my soul and affected my heart: *Voces illæ influebant auribus meis et eliquabatur veritas in cor meum, et exæstuabat inde affectus pietatis, et fluebant lacrymæ et bene mihi erat pro illis.*"

4. *Your own interest.* An ecclesiastic who does not understand singing, and who is not able to take part in the chanting without disturbing it, is by that very fact in a sort of irregularity which debars him from any personal contribution to religious solemnities. Should he not regret this defect? Do not the faithful esteem him less on account of it? Does it not restrict his ministry, and render it less agreeable and less fruitful?

THIRD POINT. After the example of St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, St. Vincent de Paul and others, resolve to study ecclesiastical chant from a

spirit of obedience, religion and zeal: *Ut cantem gloriam tuam, Domine, tota die magnitudinem tuam.* (Ps. LXX, 8.) Be not merely faithful to your exercises, but zealous. Good will is an essential condition for success. We learn nothing which we do not love, and our success is always in proportion to our desire to learn: *Habes in potestate vocem tuam. Frangis vocem: frange et voluntatem; ut per exemplum concordes proximo, per voluntatem Deo, per obedientiam magistro.* (ST. BERNARD.)

Meditate on what history tells us of St. Gregory's zeal for the correct execution of liturgical chant.

MEDITATION XXVII.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CATECHISING AND INSTRUCTING THE YOUNG.

FIRST POINT. Adore the Son of God calling the little children to Himself that He may express His desire to initiate them in His doctrine and to start them on the way to heaven: *Sinite parvulos venire ad me: talium est enim regnum cœlorum.* (MATTHEW, XIX, 14.) Not satisfied with blessing them, He made His apostles admire their simplicity, their innocence and their humility. He wished them to

remember that in heaven there are angels before the face of God to protect each of these little ones: *Videte ne contemnatis unum de pusillis istis. Dico enim vobis quia angeli eorum in cœlis semper vident faciem Patris mei qui in cœlis est.* (MATTH., XVIII, 10.) Such is the respect which our Savior wishes that we should have for the least of His little ones, and the charity which He desires should animate us in dealing with the poorest child. Ask God for the grace that you may ever regard young souls with the eyes of faith and that you may always regulate your sentiments and your conduct towards them by His word and His example: *Quis tumescens de sua vel magnitudine vel scientia, parvitatem deinceps parvulorum vel imbecillitatem audebit aspernari, quando tu, o piissime Jesu, Qui es Deus in sæcula, usque ad castissimos parvulorum amplexus beata brachia mansuetus inclinas!* (GERSON.)

SECOND POINT. Consider what evils will arise if we neglect to catechise or instruct the young.

1. *The majority of the faithful would then have only a very imperfect notion of religion.* Experience teaches that those who have not been instructed in their childhood neglect this instruction later on

and thus spend their lives ignorant of religious truths. Is it for the want of time, of intelligence, of good will, or of other means? Frequently all these causes combine. When men have chosen a profession, devoted themselves to business or a trade, their affairs absorb their entire attention. They have not, or they imagine that they have not, any time to devote to religious instruction. On the other hand many are incapable of studying by themselves, and we know that it is very difficult to profit by common instructions when our fundamental notions are obscure. Finally, who has not experienced how mortifying it is for an elderly man to confess that he is ignorant concerning religious matters and that he is endeavoring to learn?

2. *Their piety will be only superficial.* Knowing little of religious history, having hardly any idea of Jesus Christ, of His mysteries, of His doctrine, of His moral law, how will they be able to learn and to throughly understand the truths of Christianity? Necessarily their faith will be weak and their piety vacillating. What esteem can they have for the Christian virtues of penance, of self-sacrifice, of self-denial? If at times they approach the sacraments

they will not prepare themselves properly, and they will derive but little fruit from them. If they feel an attraction towards perfection, they will not know in what it consists, nor will they be able to practice it. *Ubi non est scientia animæ, non est bonum.* (Prov., xix, 2.)

3. *He will have to fear that many will die outside of the way of salvation.* A knowledge of certain dogmas is necessary for one to make acts of faith and charity without which one could not regain the grace of God nor merit heaven. Although these dogmas are few and simple it is not rare, say many holy doctors, as Bellarmin, Benedict xiv, etc., to find even in well instructed parishes men who have not sufficient knowledge of them or who have entirely forgotten them. If they have not been instructed from childhood, as they should have been, we may apply to them the words of the Apostle regarding infidels: *Quomodo invocabunt in quem non crediderunt? Et quomodo credent sine prædicante?* (Romans, x, 15.)

Third Point. God of goodness, you love everything that you have made, and wish well to all the works of your hands: *Nihil odisti eorum quæ fecisti.* (Sap., xi, 25.) Those, however, whom you cherish

most, are those whom you have made to your own image and whom you have destined to partake of your glory. *Domine, Qui amas animas* (ibid.), fill me with the same charity. Make me love the souls of others with all my heart so as to start them on the way to heaven and to give them the instruction which they need in order to please you. In the eyes of faith no other work is so important. Would that I had an attraction for no other! *Nescio prorsus si quidquam majus esse potest quam tales parvulorum animas quasi plantare et rigare, ut eis det incrementum Christus.* (GERSON.)

Study, when you are able, the wonderful treatise of St. Augustine: *De catechisandis rudibus. Si usitata et parvulis congruentia sæpe repetere fastidimus, congruamus eis,* said this saintly Doctor, *per paternum maternumque amorem, et copulatis cordi eorum etiam nobis nova videbuntur. Delectari nos oportet, cum ipsum Deum jam discere homines accedunt, propter quem discenda sunt quæcumque discenda sunt.* (x, 15.)

MEDITATION XXVIII.

ON THE ADVANTAGES WHICH THE CATECHIST DERIVES FROM HIS INSTRUCTIONS.

First Point. Adore the Divine Master teaching you by word and example the care which you ought to take of the little ones, of the poor and uneducated. It was for them in particular, for those who needed His assistance and who recognized their deficiency that He came upon earth: *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me.* (Luke, iv, 18.) It was the destitution of the poor that excited Him to the greatest pity; that caused Him to bewail the scarcity of good pastors: *Misertus est eis, quia erant vexati et jacentes, sicut greges non habentes pastorem.* (Matthew, ix, 36.) To show the interest which He takes in them and to excite the zeal of His apostles, He assures us that He will consider anything done for the least of them as done for Him: *Amen dico vobis: quamdiu fecisti uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecisti.* (Matthew, xxv, 40.) Ask our Savior to make you see things as He sees them and to animate you with His love.

Second Point. Consider the advantages which you will derive from teaching catechism. For a

young ecclesiastic it is the easiest, least perilous, and the most fruitful instruction he can give.

1. *It is the easiest.* All admit that to be an excellent catechist it is necessary to have intelligence, to have a good deal of knowledge and to be carefully prepared; but of the various kinds of instruction a priest is called on to give, catechetical instruction is that in which mediocre learning can most easily be turned to good account if the catechist has good will, charity and a desire to be useful. Sound doctrine, expressed in natural and simple language, with a pious and pleasing tone, is all that is necessary. This does not require strenuous efforts nor great labor: *Non est labor, sed sapor.* (St. Augustine.)

2. *It is the least dangerous,* because it does not expose you to vanity or discouragement. We know, says St. Gregory the Great, how many preachers fail to avoid these reefs. When they realize that they have a facility for expressing the word of God, they are exalted in their own estimation, intoxicated by their success: *De ostensione sui occulta lætitia loquentis animus sublevatur.* This is what made St. Augustine say that if he had consulted his own interest, he would have preferred to sit among the faith-

ful rather than to instruct or exhort them: *Tutius enim veritas auditur quam prædicatur.* If, on the other hand, a preacher realizes that he is unsuccessful; that the fruits of a sermon are not in proportion to the care spent in preparing it; that he does not receive the appreciation, the applause, which he expects, he is apt to be discouraged, and to have no inclination to preach again. Then he exclains with Job: *Quare frustra laboravi?* (IX, 29.) Such a result is no less to be deplored and no less fatal. In teaching catechism, however, you are not exposed to this two-edged weapon. If you possess ordinary knowledge and talent your success will be in proportion to your good will. Should you experience any difficulty at first, you will not be exposed to discouragement, but on the contrary you will strive with greater efforts. This will greatly promote your progress. Therefore instead of exposing you to discouragement, catechising will be very beneficial to you.

3. *It is the most useful.* 1. At present. Of all those whom an ecclesiastic must instruct and direct children are the least remote from God's kingdom, and the easiest to gain to our Savior. They may be thoughtless, inattentive, unintelligent; many may

have already lost their baptismal innocence, but they have not become incredulous, unmanageable, enemies of truth and religion. With kindness and patience you can make them love and practice both. 2. For the future. Experience has taught us that habits formed in childhood will last until old age: *Proverbium est: Adolescens juxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab ea.* (Prov., xxii, 7.) To form the young well, to instruct them carefully in Christian truths, to accustom them to solid piety, in a word to entrust the children to well trained and capable catechists, is a sure means of rearing a believing and a virtuous generation, thereby reëstablishing order in poorly regulated parishes: *Filii tibi sunt? Erudi illos in disciplina et correptione Domini.* (Eph., vi, 4.) *Bonum est viro cum portaverit jugum ab adolescentia sua.* (Lam., iii, 27.)

Third Point. Thank our Savior for having called upon you from now on to engage in the work of sanctifying souls by instructing the young. What better work could one undertake, says St. Chrysostom: "*Quid majus quam adolescentulorum mores fingere?*" The most famous artists have done nothing comparable to this: *Omni certe pictorum, omni*

statuariorum arte excellentius hoc duco. The masterpieces of Phydias, admirable as they might be, were but statues, but inanimate figures. The catechist produces living images of the Savior, lights within them His light, animates them with His ideas, imparts to them His life. Is it wonderful that great doctors have devoted themselves to this work, convinced that it afforded them the best means whereby to atone for their faults, obtain pardon for their delinquencies and secure the blessings of God? *Qui memor est delictorum juventutis suæ, sicut mihi conscius sum,* wrote one of them, *effervent ad hoc opus quod tegit peccata et tegendo dimittit.* (GERSON.)

Endeavor to acquaint yourself with the treatise of Gerson: *De parvulis ad Christum trahendis,* the "Work of Catechising," by Msgr. Dupanloup, and the Life and Spirit of Mons. Allemand."

MEDITATION XXIX.

ON THE MOTIVES WHICH SHOULD PROMPT US IN OUR FIRST INSTRUCTIONS.

FIRST POINT. Consider the pure intention of our divine Savior in instructing the people. He did not wish them to admire His humanity: *Mea doc-*

trina non est mea, sed ejus qui misit me Patris. (JOHN, VII, 17.) If anyone preaches his own ideas he seeks popularity; but I do not seek my own glory: *Qui a semetipso loquitur, gloriam propriam quærit.* (JOHN, VII, 18.) *Ego autem non quæro gloriam meam: est qui quærat et judicet.* (JOHN, VII, 50.) Such should be the sentiments of His ministers. Their doctrine is that of their Master, their language ought to be, as much as possible, the language of God: *Quasi sermones Dei.* (I PETER, IV, 11.) Why should they be proud of their sermons or foster vain thoughts?

SECOND POINT. Consider why you should be careful of your motives in giving your first instructions.

1. Nothing exposes us more to the temptation of self-love than preaching, because nothing can more easily attract the attention of the faithful and nothing affords us a better opportunity to display our knowledge and talents: *Doctrina sua cognoscitur vir.* (PROV., XII, 8.) "The prophet declared beautiful the feet which carry to souls light and salvation; but even these feet are liable to be stained by the dust of vanity: *Cum prædicatur, vix non subrepit quantulunque jactantia in qua utique inquinantur pedes.*" (ST. AUGUSTINE.) "As for me," adds the saintly Doc-

tor, "I am forced to admit this weakness in my heart; and you know, my God, how often I have deplored it in your presence:" *Tu nosti de hac re coram te, Domine gemitus cordis mei et flumina oculorum meorum.*" "I confess to my confusion," said St Gregory, at the end of his Commentary on Job, "that it is rare that, communing with myself and examining my conscience after a work of some duration, I do not discover some return of self-love, some secret desire to please and to be praised: *Intentioni qua Deo placere studeo, furtim se nescio quomodo, intentio humanæ laudis interserit.* Thus although we eat only to renew the strength of our bodies we cannot but experience a certain sensible satisfaction and at times we even yield to sensuality: *Sicut pro necessitate quidem cibus sumitur, sed in ipso esu edendi delectatio permiscetur.*"

2. Never is self-love more alive, never is its influence more to be feared, than when we perform our first duties in public. Then especially, we are not able to deny that we are the object of everyone's attention and we are exposed to all kinds of judgments. It is very difficult to think only of God, when the world considers only man, and to say with

all sincerity like the Apostle: *Mihi pro minimo est ut a vobis judicer: qui enim judicat me Dominus est.* (I Cor., x, 4.) *Difficile est Deo tantum judice esse contentum,* said St. Jerome. On the other hand, it is in the beginning that we are more easily deceived either by the value of the praises which we receive or by the competency of our judges. It is rare, said St. Ambrose, that a young man is impervious to esteem of the world and is truly humble: *Rara est in juvenibus humilitas.*

3. The direction of our first steps and the habits we form during the first years of our ministry will determine our conduct in after life. If we are faithful from the beginning to repress all impulses of self-love and to follow the Spirit of God, if we know how to distinguish in our ministry what is due to grace and what comes from nature, if we do not forget to compare what we do to what we should do, and what the saints of God have accomplished, in place of being exalted by our merits we will be ashamed of our nothingness, we will be confused at the sight of our faults and thus our affections will be more and more purified. In this way our labors will bear fruit and having sowed for God we will reap for Him.

Obliged to preach before he was a priest, the humble Philip Neri, converted thirty university students of Rome by a single sermon. If, however, from the beginning we preach for ourselves, if we commence by coveting praise and applause, what evil does this not predict for the future? In what danger do we not live if we deliver ourselves up to vanity? May it not be said of us some day what seems to have been written of the prince of pride, of the greatest antagonist of our Savior: *Omne sublime videt, et ipse est rex super universos filios superbiæ!* (JOB., XLI, 25.)

THIRD POINT. Combat courageously every tendency of self-love and neglect nothing which would make you humble. Have constantly before you the example of the Son of God, so modest in His exterior, in His sentiments, in His language: *Cogitemus quid nobis prærogatum sit ab eo qui demonstravit nobis exemplum ut sequamur vestigia ejus.* (ST. AUGUSTINE.) Having to appear in public to speak, spurn the suggestions of nature and unite yourself to the Spirit of your Master. Say to our Savior that it is for Him alone that you wish to speak. Aspire to nothing else but to be useful, to instruct, to convince and to lead souls to God. Implore His goodness

in order to promote His glory by the act which you are about to perform, glad if it be at the expense of your self-love, if it so please Him, and saying beforehand with the Psalmist: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.* (Ps. CXIII, 9.) *Tibi Domine, justitia: nobis autem confusio faciei.* (DAN., IX, 7.)

Father De Ravignan said of his sermons: "I do not know if I speak well or poorly and I am not concerned about it. My only desire is that my Master should be glorified and His servant humbled." He also added: "A proud preacher is one who does the work of God in concert with the devil. He will be occupied with the interests of the one and the other."

MEDITATION XXX.

ON THE EXEMPLARY LIFE WHICH THE LECTOR SHOULD LEAD.

FIRST POINT. Adore the Son of God, the model and teacher of Christians. Unlike the Pharisees who preached and did not perform, He began by doing and then taught: *Cœpit facere et docere.* (ACTS, I, 1.) He asked His disciples no more than

that they follow in His footsteps. Never did He require them to make a sacrifice which He had not made. *Exemplum enim dedi vobis ut quemadmodum ego feci, ita et vos faciatis.* (JOHN, XIII, 15.) Such ought to be your rule. Teach the people the Word of God, but above all give them the example of practising it. Let them speak rather of your virtue than of the exactness and profound learning of your discourses. *Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est.* (MATT., V, 16.) How useful and how important is this recommendation! Humble yourself and implore God for that grace which you need to spend your life in harmony with your words: *Ut quod ore legis, corde credas et opere compleas.* (PONTIF.)

SECOND POINT. Reflect on those three maxims of the Pontifical which the Bishop teaches you and with which you ought to be penetrated.

1. The higher one advances in the Church, the greater should be one's virtue and merits: *In alto loco Ecclesiæ stantes, in alto virtutum gradu debetis conversari.* (PONTIF.) A high dignity conferred on an unworthy ecclesiastic would be similar to a

diamond in the mud: *Quid dignitas in indigno nisi ornamentum in luto?* (SILVIAN.) Hear, said St. Bernard this refrain which I am forced to repeat: *Et nunc audi canticum meum et quidem minus suave sed salutare,* It is a terrible sight to see an unworthy soul placed in an eminent position: *Monstruosa res est gradus summus et animus infimus, sedes prima et vita ima, lingua magniloqua et manus otiosa, sermo multus et fructus nullus. Numquid potest abscondi civitatis supra montem positæ desolatio aut latere fumus lucernæ extinctæ super candelabrum?*

2. A man's conduct should be as holy as the sublimity of the morality which he teaches. Evidently the Pontifical supposes this principle: *Quatenus cunctis a quibus audimini et videmini, cœlestis vitæ forman præbeatis.* All the Fathers of the Church could be cited as teaching this doctrine. *Qui loci sui necessitate cogitur summa dicere, eadem necessitate compellitur, summa monstrare,* says St. Gregory the Great, *hinc per prophetam dicitur: Super montem excelsum ascende tu, qui evangelizas Sion.* St. Isidore of Seville expresses the same thought in different words. The preacher who does not wish his efforts to be useless should edify as well as instruct the faithful

and should also be as distinguished for his virtue as for his eloquence: *Quantum claret verbo, tantum clarescat et merito.* Does not experience teach this as well as authority?

3. He condemns himself and subjects his ministry to derision who neglects to practice what he preaches. *Bene loqui et male vivere, quid est, nisi seipsum de sua voce damnare?* (St. Prosper.) Be not like those builders of Noe's ark who allowed the waters of the deluge to drown them after they had provided for the salvation of others; nor like the waters of Baptism which after purifying souls are thrown into the drain. Do not imitate those whom the prophet describes, *qui prædicant pacem et mordent dentibus* (Mich., iii, 15); nor those whom St. Bernard calls *doctores humilitatis, duces superbiæ.* If your actions belie your words you will lose not only your influence but even the respect which an ordinary man deserves. *Non confundant opera tua sermonem tuum, ne cum in ecclesia loqueris, tacitus quilibet respondeat: Cur ergo quæ dicis, ipse non facis?* What is more ridiculous or more shocking than to preach penance and to live a life of sensuality, to advocate indifference to worldly goods while you are a slave to covetous-

ness? *Delicatus magister es, qui pleno ventre de jejuniis disputas. Accusare avaritiam et latro potest.* You who have the voice of Jacob how can you have at the same time the hands of Esau? In a representative of our Savior everything should be in harmony: *Sacerdotis Christi os, mens, manusque concordet.*

THIRD POINT. Realize what you have taken upon yourself by becoming the mouth-piece of the Word of God: *relator verbi Dei.* On the majority of the faithful and in particular on the minds of children words alone make hardly any impression. Example is necessary. It alone is effective and capable of inducing one to do good. Always be an example to your hearers. Let them see what you do. Let humility, kindness, poverty and devotion to our Savior appear in your countenance and bearing as well as on your lips. This will make your exhortations efficacious and willl enable you to gain souls for Christ, while meriting for you a share in the glory of the Holy Apostles: *Habituri, si fideliter et utiliter impleveritis officium vestrum, partem cum iis qui verbum Dei ministraverunt ab initio.* (PONTIF.)

It is related of Father Brydaine that one day while reciting his office with several confrères he noticed

these words of the Psalmist: *Peccatori dixit Deus: Quare tu enarras justitiam meam et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum? Tu vero odisti disciplinam et projecisti sermones meos retrosum.* Applying these to himself the humble missionary was not able to continue. He was forced to withdraw so as to give full vent to his tears. We read of a similar incident in the Life of Origen.

MEDITATION XXXI.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM A MODEL FOR THE LECTOR IN STUDYING HOLY SCRIPTURE.

First Point. Admire in St. John Chrysostom, a perfect model of that zeal which you ought to have for studying Holy Scripture and becoming a successful preacher. This holy doctor surpassed all in teaching the truths of Christianity. No one could present the proofs of religion, the mysteries of Christianity, the evangelical maxims, and the true meaning of the Sacred Writings in more popular and at the same time in more noble language than he. None could enlighten minds and gain hearts as easily as he. The surname which his contemporaries gave him and which posterity has sanctioned proves his

preëminence as the most eloquent Doctor of any age: *Propter aureum eloquentiæ flumen, cognomento Chrysostomus.* Before preaching he had spent many hours in secret study; he had learned the spirit, style and even the letter of Holy Scripture: in fact it was always, as it were, the Word of God, which he delivered: *Quasi sermones Dei.* (I Pet., iv, 1.) Implore our divine Savior to give you a share in the gifts and virtues of this great Doctor.

Second Point. Consider what St. John Chrysostom did to acquire a knowledge of Scripture and how he prepared himself to preach.

1. He began by renouncing all profane occupations, the arguments of the lawyers as well as the meetings of the rhetoricians, to apply every moment of his time to the study of religion and the Holy Books. He sacrificed to his vocation all that had contributed to his pleasure and his reputation in the world. The profound knowledge of our Savior, of His mysteries, and of Christianity, which he knew was concealed in the Scriptures and which he would endeavor to acquire, could not, he thought, be bought at too high a price: *Existimo omnia detrimentum esse,* said he like St. Paul, *propter eminentem scien-*

tiam Jesu Christi Domini mei, propter quem omnia detrimentum feci, et arbitror ut stercora, ad cognoscendum illum et virtutem resurrectionis ejus et societatem passionum illius. (PHIL., III, 89.) Examine in God's presence if St. John was not correct and if your own conviction corresponds to his?

2. St. John Chrysotom joined to his study, prayer, mortification and all the practices of a perfect life. Elevated to the lectorate at the age of twenty-two he retired to the mountains of Syria among the solitaries who were most renowned for their doctrine and their sanctity. After having spent four years in their school he remained two years in solitude to fill himself with the spirit and the letter of the inspired books. How could God have done otherwise than bless such zeal and reward such perseverance? The choicest favors were conferred on this great saint. If he could say with the writer of the book of Ecclesiasticus: *Cum adhuc junior essem, quæsivi sapientiam palam in oratione* he could also add with the inspired writer: *et effloruit tanquam præcox uva. Lætatum est cor meum in ea. Dedit mihi Dominus linguam mercedem meam, et in ipsa laudabo eum.* (ECCLI., 18, 20, 30.) There is no one, says

the Church, who does not admire the piety and the number of his writings. The entire world renders homage to him for his exactness in exposing the sense of Holy Scripture, and they do not believe that they detract from the glory of the Great Apostle by saying that he has, in many cases, been elucidated by the words and the writings of his great interpreter: *Dignum existimant cui Paulus Apostolus, quem ille mirifice coluit scribenti et prædicanti multa dictasse videatur.* (BREV.) Is this not an example for you? Could an ecclesiastic, desirous of doing some good, do better than to imitate this model as much as his position and ability will allow? *Sapientiam antiquorum exquiret sapiens. Si enim Dominus magnus voluerit, spiritu intelligentiæ replebit eum, et ipse tanquam imbres mittet eloquia sapientiæ suæ.* (ECCLI., XXXIX, 1, 6.)

3. But what is most to be admired in this great doctor is his purity of intention. He withdrew from the world and applied himself to study not from a desire to get a reputation by the novelty of his doctrine or the eloquence of his preaching; he did so from a desire to know Jesus Christ, to serve His Church, to sanctify himself, and to contribute to

the sanctification of others: *Paravit cor suum ut investigaret legem Domini, et faceret et doceret.* (II Esd., vii, 10.) To be convinced of this we have but to read his treatise on the priesthood, to study his instructions to the faithful, to consider his style, always simple and natural even on the most profound subjects, to reflect on his conduct in the see of Constantinople as well as in the ranks of the most humble priests of Antioch. Nothing, we may be sure, is more essential to gain the aid of heaven and to profit by it than this purity of intention. Before anything else, a pure intention, a single eye: *Si oculus tuus fuerit simplex totum corpus lucidum erit.* (Matth., vi, 22.) *Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.* (Matth., v, 4.) *Hoc est mundum cor, quod est simplex cor.* (St. Augustine.) Those who seek in studying Holy Scripture their own interest, their advancement, their reputation, will never be truly successful because their mind, not being in accord with God's, cannot receive His communications and cannot perceive His truth.

Third Point. Abandon frivolous reading and profane studies: *Si qua in Christo nova creatura, vetera transierunt: ecce facta sunt omnia nova.* Study the

Sacred Writings. Nourish yourself with the truths they contain: *Operamini, non cibum qui perit, sed qui permanet in vitam æternam.* (JOHN, VI, 27.) Without being in the desert as was St. John, you have hours of quiet and leisure: *Cur non tempora quibus vacas, lectioni impendas? Cur non Christum revisas, Christum alloquaris, Christum audias?* (ST. AMBROSE.) Hasten to grasp the doctrine of salvation and to satiate your soul therewith: *Manna in mane juventutis debet colligi: non enim invenitur nisi mane.* The day will come when you will receive the reward of all your troubles and the recompense for all your labors: *Operamini opus vestrum, et dabit vobis mercedem vestram in tempore suo.* (ECCLI., LI, 39.)

We read in the Vulgate: *Qui docti fuerint fulgebunt quasi splendor firmamenti; et qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos, quasi stellæ in perpetuas æternitates.* (DAN., XII, 3.) This Theodotion translated: "Men who are at once learned and holy will shine like the firmament, and those who are holy without being learned will shine like stars. Hence St. Jerome concludes: *Tantum est inter eruditam sanctitatem et sanctam rusticitatem quantum cœlum distet a stellis.*

SECTION 4.

THE ORDER OF EXORCIST.

MEDITATION XXXII.

ON THE POWER CONFERRED ON THE EXORCIST.

First Point. Let us thank the Son of God for having come upon the earth to triumph over Satan and to destroy his empire: *In hoc apparuit Filius Dei ut dissolvat opera diaboli.* (I John, III, 8.) To make us recognize that He was the true liberator of souls and to show us that He lacked neither the power nor the will to fulfil His mission, He began by expelling devils from possessed bodies: *Pertransiit benefaciendo et sanando omnes oppressos a diabolo,* (Act., X, 8.) The deliverances however which He accomplished in person were not sufficient to fulfil His design. He gave His Apostles a similar power: *Dedit illis potestatem spirituum immundorum.* (Matthew., X, 1); and He wished them to appoint others to exercise this power to the end of time. *Accipite potestatem imponendi manus super energumenos,*

the bishop will say to you when he confers minor orders upon you. Admire the greatness of this power. Thank our Savior for deigning to confer it upon you and beg Him to teach you how perfect you should be, in order to exercise it worthily.

Second Point. To appreciate the greatness of this power you should make the following considerations:

1. The exorcist does not receive authority over creatures of an inferior order; not over an inactive and material nature but over active, spiritual and intelligent beings whose natural faculties are far superior to those of human nature. Notwithstanding the rebellious state to which their pride has subjected them they are forced to listen to the voice of God's ministers and to obey their commands. "Come," wrote St. Cyprian, to an infidel whom he wished to convert, "you shall yourself recognize the omnipotence of our God: *Videbis nos ab ipsis rogari quos rogas, timere quos times, sub manus nostras stare vinctos et tremere captivos quos veneraris ut dominos.* Believe the confessions which the devils make, or rather recognize in them the organs of the Prince of lies: *Vel ipsis quos colis crede, vel tibi, si*

volueris." The power of the Exorcist is therefore openly exercised over the princes of Hell: *In potestate et virtute imperat immundis spiritibus, et exeunt.* (LUKE, IV, 35.)

2. The Exorcist not only gives the demons orders, which they must obey, but he also inflicts punishments upon them severer than which they could not endure. Ordinarily he does not entirely overcome the infernel spirit except after a prolonged struggle. Thus the first effect of the exorcism is to excite in the demoniac transports of rage, convulsions and blasphemies. *Oh! si audire velles et videre, quando a nobis adjuvantur, torquentur, spiritualibus flagris, verborum tormentis de obsessis corporibus ejiciuntur!*

3. The power which the Exorcist possesses is only a participation of that power which the Son of God will exercise at the end of the world when He will come in His glory to expel the Prince of devils, with all his legions, from His empire: *cum venerit glorificari in sanctis suis* (II THESS., I, 10)*; cum tradiderit regnum Deo et Patri; cum evacuerit omnem principatum et potestatem et virtutem, ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus.* (I COR., XV, 24.) What the devils said formerly to our Savior when they recognized

His power over them: *Venisti ante tempus torquere nos* (MATTH., VIII, 29), they must say to His ministers today. The Exorcist, anticipating the day of judgment by virtue of his office, recovers what the demons have removed from the empire of their master, and takes away the species of consolation which they experience in exercising their fury on unfortunate subjects.

THIRD POINT. See what power is attached to this minor order and to what dignity it raises those who receive it: *Spiritibus immundis imperat et obediunt ei.* (MARC., I, 27.) *Ut sint spirituales imperatores ad abjiciendos dæmones de corporibus obsessis, cum omni nequitia eorum multiplici.* (PONTIF.) Is it astonishing, then, that great saints should consider themselves unworthy to receive it and that St. Martin, the apostle of Gaul, should feel that he would be too highly honored by it? Even though it is rare that an exorcist exercises this power today, nevertheless he is invested with it; and it is even allowable for him to use it privately, not having recourse to consecrated formulas. Therefore he must always respect his dignity, be grateful to God for it, possess the spirit and practice the virtues of

his office. Implore our Savior to make you faithful to all these duties and make the resolutions which His Spirit will suggest to you.

Inferiora sibi Martinus munia sumpsit.
Exorcista gradu, sed jam virtute sacerdos.

(St. Paulin., *Carm. de St. Martin.*)

MEDITATION XXXIII.

WHY THE FUNCTIONS OF EXORCIST ARE LESS FREQUENTLY EXERCISED THAN FORMERLY.

First Point. Adore Our Risen Savior, glorified in heaven. Adore Him as the conqueror of Satan who triumphs over the infernal powers: *Nunc judicium est mundi; nunc princeps hujus mundi ejicietur foras.* (Joan, xii, 31.) At the end of time, this triumph will be complete, and evident to all eyes; but even now it is assured, incontestable: *Expolians principatus et potestates, traduxit confidenter, palam triumphans illos in semetipso.* (Col., ii, 11.) *De cætero expectans, donec ponantur inimici ejus scabellum pedum ejus.* (Heb., x, 13.) Satan is obliged to tremble, even before His ministers and His saints. *Jesum novi et Paulum scio,* said he, and

indeed "there were brought from his body to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them." (Act., xix, 12, 15.) Rejoice in seeing the members of the Church thus protected against the visible tyranny of the evil spirit, and beseech Our Savior to succor them, with the same efficacy against his invisible attacks: *adversus insidias diaboli, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum.* (Eph., vi, 12.)

Second Point. Why are there fewer persons possessed since the establishment of Christianity? This fact arises from various causes.

1. Because Christians, being more especially consecrated to God, belong more perfectly to Him. From the moment of their entry into the Church, they can be called and truly are His children: *Dedit nobis Pater ut filii Dei nominemur et simus.* (I Joan, iii, 1.) United to Our Savior by baptism and nourished by His flesh and blood in the Eucharist, they form with Him but one body, and if they place no obstacle in the way of His communications, they permanently participate in His spirit and in His life. *Omnes nos in unum corpus baptizati sumus et omnes in uno Spiritu potati sumus.* (I Cor., xii, 13.)

Quæ autem conventio Christi ad Belial? Aut quæ societas luci ad tenebras? (II Cor., vi, 15.) Is it astonishing that they are sheltered from the insults of the infernal spirit? The destroying angel respected the children of the Israelites, when he saw their door-posts sprinkled with the blood of the figurative Lamb: *Transjecit gressus et non est ausus intrare.* (S. Chrys.) How could the devil be at liberty to take possession of a body purified by the water of baptism, fed on the flesh of the Divine Lamb, and entirely penetrated by His virtue? *Iste, velit nolit, dominici corporis et sanguinis intelligit veritatem.* (S. Pet. Dam.)

2. Because now the devil is no longer invoked as he was then. It is he, indeed, whom the pagans adored, and it is to him that they prayed, and addressed their sacrilegious worship: *Omnes Dii gentium dæmonia.* (Ps. xcv, 5.) *Quæ immolant gentes, dæmoniis immolant.* (I Cor., x, 20.)

In taking possession of an idolater, Satan did but accept his offering and comply with his invocation. It is no longer so in Christianity. Those who are unfortunate enough to yield to the suggestions of the devil, and to submit to his yoke, *qui captivi te-*

nentur ad ipsius voluntatem, (II Tim., II, 26), curse his tyranny and long to escape from his bondage. Even when their souls have become enslaved they do not cease to hate him, and though God may correct them as He did Alexander and Hymeneus, *ut discant non blasphemare,* (I Tim., I, 20,) still He has not the same motives for abandoning them.

3. Because in a society such as ours, whose great error is to recognize as real only what affects the senses, the better tactics for the infernal powers is not to manifest their action; but rather to dissimulate it, in order that they may be forgotten; and that their very existence be rendered doubtful. Who does not see, indeed, that if the impious were truly convinced of the existence of the devil, that is, of a being spiritual, personal, active and superior to man, their prejudices against God and against heaven would become groundless? Who can fail to see that unbelievers could not help trembling for themselves were they to become convinced of the punishment of the rebellious angels; and that, if they so boldly turn into derision the teaching of the Church concerning the spirit of darkness, his snares and his torments, it is because to convict her of error upon this

point, would be to shake all her doctrine concerning the invisible world, the future life, heaven, hell, eternity, etc.

THIRD POINT. Strengthen your faith in the dogmas which are most offensive to the incredulous; the reality of hell, the existence of demons, diabolical possessions and temptations. Sincerely and ardently believe the teachings of the Church upon these points as upon all others. Nothing is more essential. Without belief there is no Christian practice. Without firm conviction there is no fervor. If the existence of the devil appeared doubtful to you, what ardor would you have to resist him? In what degree would you have grace to combat him, either in yourself or in others? How would you merit the titles with which the Church honors you, *spirituales Ecclesiæ medici, spirituales imperatores ad abigendos dæmones*? From our faith comes our strength: *Cui resistite fortes in fide.* (I PET., v, 9.) Often ask Our Savior to fortify in you more and more so important a virtue: *Domine, adauge nobis fidem.* (LUC., XVII, 5.) *Credo, Domine: adjuva incredulitatem nostram.* (MARC., IX. 24.)

Choose on these days, for your reading of the Holy

Scripture, the principal passages in the Gospels, which tell of the cures of demoniacs. MATTH., VIII, 28–34; IX, 32–34; XII, 22–30; XV, 21–28; XVII, 14–20. ACT., XVI, 16–18; XIX, 1–29.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

WHY SO MANY OF THE FAITHFUL SEEM TO DISREGARD THE ACTION OR EVEN THE EXISTENCE OF THE DEVIL.

FIRST POINT. Admire the knowledge of the Savior, and the incomparable light with which His soul has always been endowed. For Him the realities of the invisible world were as manifest as those of the visible world. Hence He often speaks of the angels and of the devils, of heaven and of hell, of the future life and of eternity: *Videbam Satanam sicut fulgur de cœlo cadentem.* (LUC., X, 18.) *An putas quia non possum rogare Patrem meum et exhibebit mihi modo plus quam duodecim legiones angelorum?* (MATTH., XXVII, 53.) A similar remark can be made in reading the lives of the saints. A great many of them seem to have conversed with the spirits almost as familiarly as with their fellow-men. Entreat Our Savior to give you a faith so vivid as to make

up for those extraordinary graces which it has not pleased Him to bestow upon you.

Second Point. Consider how great a number of Christians appear to disregard the activity and even the existence of the devil. This arises from various causes.

1. *Because they are little instructed in the revealed truths and they do not reflect sufficiently upon the little they know of them.* Many imagine that the devil exists only in the fancy of a few superstitious minds. Nothing is farther from the reality. The devil is mentioned everywhere in the Bible from the first page to the last. He is spoken of in the New Testament, as much and even more than in the Old. The miracles which the Savior performs in favor of the possessed, miracles which He alleges in proof of this mission the power which He gives to His Apostles over the devils, and the use which they make of it, occupy too much space, to escape even the least attentive reader. Others seem to consider this kind of narratives of the sacred or ecclesiastical writers as allegories or metaphors. They forget that they have always been interpreted literally; that even in the time of Christ the cures of demoniacs were cited

as miraculous works. To deny diabolical operations, or to account them as imaginary legends would be to contradict the most obvious pages of Holy Scripture. Now if we will accept the narratives of the sacred writers concerning the cures of demoniacs wrought by the word of the Savior, and of the Apostles, the miracles of Gadara, the python of Ephesus, the struggle of St. Michael against the devil, under what pretext could facts of the same kind contained in the lives of the saints be rejected a priori or even considered as unlikely?

2. *Because of the fear which some have of being considered unintellectual or the aversion which the thought of hell inspires.* Indeed to acknowledge the reality of a supernatural fact, even if it be well proven, is to compromise our reputation in the opinion of the world, and to expose ourselves to the derision of free-thinkers, so numerous and so powerful in our day. To despise such consequences demands courage and abnegation. Now these qualities are rare. On the other hand it is certain that, unless our conscience be perfectly tranquil, we do not like to think of hell, of the consequences of sin, of the devil, and of the danger of becoming his victim. Must we be sur-

prised that people endeavor to suppress facts which call it to mind, and like the governor Felix, hasten to say to those who broach the question: "For this time go thy way?" (Acts, xxiv, 25.)

3. *The ruses of the spirit of darkness.* He imitates the hunter, who conceals himself to catch more game. Is it not the best way of surprising sinners, and causing them to fall into hell, to inspire a false security by persuading them that there is neither a tempter to conquer nor a judgment to undergo nor a damnation to dread, or at least to prevent them from reflecting upon the dangers which they incur, and upon the fate which menaces them?

Third Point. Do not be scandalized by what the Gospel relates about the operations of the wicked spirit, or the possessions which the Church supposes always possible and upon which she has a right to pass judgment: *Noli erubescere testimonium Domini nostri.* (II Tim., i, 8.) If the devil existed at one epoch, how could he cease to exist? And if formerly he exercised so great a power why should he be entirely inactive now? Have the courage to show that you take seriously the power with which you have been vested as Exorcist. Have great respect

for the exorcisms which are made in baptism, in the blessing of water, etc. Honor the holy water and the sacramentals, which, though not having sufficient efficacy to justify, can produce effects of grace and defend us against the devil. Read in the Roman Ritual the chapter on exorcisms.

MEDITATION XXXV.

DISPOSITIONS OF THE DEVIL TOWARDS THE EXORCIST.

First Point. Adore the God-Man as the essential enemy of evil, and the born adversary of Satan the author of all evil. He hates the devil in consequence of the same sentiment which causes Him to love His Father, and the devil hates Him with all the hatred which he bears towards God and towards all that belongs to God. This opposition between them has been announced from the beginning of the world; "I will put, saith the Lord, an irreconcilable enmity between the Son of the woman and thee, He will end by crushing thy head; but He will have in thee an implacable enemy and thou shalt ever strive to bruise His heel: *Conteret caput tuum et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus.*" (Gen., iii, 15.) Indeed,

since Our Savior appeared upon earth, Satan has not ceased to pursue Him, either in His person or in His representatives or in His members. It is he who induced Judas to sell Him to the Jews, and the the Jews to ask for His punishment. It is he, who has raised up so many persecutions, and inspired in tyrants so much fury against Christians. *Descendit diabolus, habens iram magnam . . . . accusator fratrum nostrorum.* (Apoc., xii, 10, 12.) Beseech Our Lord to give you of His virtue, to fight against and overcome this enemy of all sanctity.

Second Point. Consider the special motives which lead the devil to hate the exorcist.

1. The devil sees in the exorcist a representative of Our Savior Who has vanquished him. He sees him armed with the authority of the God-Man, charged to continue his work and to complete this triumph. Why would he not turn against the minister a fury which he cannot satiate against the Master? If the sight of a crucifix redoubles his blasphemies, what rage ought not the living image of this conqueror, the official representative of Him Who has sworn his doom, and Who would annihilate his empire, inspire in him?

2. The devil sees in him a declared antagonist, who openly strives to overturn his work. The work of Satan is to withdraw as many subjects as possible from God, to divide His kindgom, to sow everywhere the spirit of pride and of independence. And what is the duty of a minister of the Church, of an exorcist, if not to increase the number of true servants of God, to extend and strengthen His rule, to make His authority respected? The devil endeavors to ruin souls, and to make them partakers of his condemnation. We can say of him still more than of his agents: *Venit ut furetur et mactet et perdat.* (JOAN., X, 10.) The minister of the Church, on the contrary, strives to save them, to make them subjects of Our Lord and to lead them to happiness: *Venit ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant.* (JOAN., X, 10.) The work of Satan consists in reducing men to slavery and in drawing them into hell, that of the exorcist in giving to them the liberty of the children of God, and in placing them upon the way to heaven: *In hoc apparuit, ut dissolvat opera diaboli.* (I JOAN., III, 8.) Between the sentiments, the designs, and the works of these two beings could there be a more perfect opposition?

3. Finally the devil sees in him an appointed enemy, armed to pursue him, to humiliate him and to make him suffer. Proud as he is, rebellious toward God, jealous of man, what torture should he not suffer, in seeing a frail creature, whom he has held in subservience, become so bold, and so powerful, as to brave his anger, attack him personally, and drive him from his domain as a fallen tyrant and a hateful slave: *Habet potestatem calcandi super omnem virtutem inimici.* (Luc., x, 19.) With what rage must not he who prowls incessantly amongst the faithful, like a roaring lion, impatient to devour them, seek to seize the cleric who challenges him, and whose profession it is to put him to flight.

Third Point. Be on your guard and remember that your life, even more than that of ordinary Christians, should be a continual warfare: *Sobrii estote et vigilate.* Your Order, far from giving you a shield against the attacks of Satan, makes you a shining mark for his snares. Learn to resist him with the constancy and the strength which faith gives you: *Cui resistite, fortes in fide.* (I Pet., v, 9.) Do not allow yourself to be conquered by the devil, whom you can and should make subject to your laws: *Ne*

illis succumbatis quos ab aliis vestro ministerio effugatis. (PONTIF.) Woe to those imprudent souls who permit themselves to be surprised! Woe to the traitors who deliver their character to profanation! Woe to the cowards, who permit a yoke, from which they should free their brethren, to be imposed upon their own shoulders! *Væ ministris infidelibus, qui, cum sint primi, fiunt novissimi!* What joy they cause the devil! What punishment and confusion they prepare for themselves for all eternity! *Quis miserebitur incantatori a serpente percusso!* (ECCLI., XII, 23.)

Read in the Acts of the Apostles, the account of the children of Sceva, exposed to the attacks and the derision of the devil (XIX, 13–15.)

MEDITATION XXXVI.

THE VIRTUES NECESSARY TO THE EXORCIST.

FIRST POINT. Adore the Son of God, having come upon earth to wage war against the devil, constantly opposed His enemy, by the dispositions of His soul as well as by His acts. He said in all truth that Satan had neither right nor power over Him, that he could claim nothing from Him: *In me non*

habet quidquam. (JOAN., XIV, 30.) *Id est, nullum germen eorum quæ seminavit,* said St. John Damascene *aut peccati vestigium aut umbræ indicium.* Before opposing him in public by His preaching and miracles, Our Savior had triumped over him in secret in the temptations in the desert. Before attacking the vices which make him reign in souls, He had perfectly practiced all the opposite virtues. This conduct is a lesson for you. It shows you how you should proceed in your ministry: *Discite per officium vestrum, vitiis imperare, ne in moribus vestris aliquid sui juris inimicus valeat nuntiare.* (PONTIF.) With what success, indeed, would you defend others against an enemy whom you did not know how to conquer in your own behalf? *Quomodo potest Satanas Satanam ejicere?* (MARC., XIII, 23.) *Aut quomodo potest quisquam intrare in domum fortis, nisi prius alligaverit fortem?* (MATTH., XII. 29.) And besides, what would you gain by delivering others, if you yourself remained under the yoke?

SECOND POINT. Consider the principal dispositions which the order and the exercise of the functions of Exorcist require.

1. *Great innocence of life and perfect purity of con-*

science. The bishop expressly requires them: *Studete igitur ut, sicut a corporibus aliorum dæmones expellitis, ita a mentibus et corporibus vestris omnem immunditiam et nequitiam ejiciatis, ne illis succumbatis quos ab aliis vestro ministerio effugatis.* (PONTIF.)

In truth, it is by a virtue from without, by the virtue of the Spirit of God, *gratia Spiritus sancti,* that the exorcist acts upon the devil; but who does not know that all are not fit to be organs of divine grace, and that since the word of the exorcisms are not sacramental, the Holy Ghost is free to reserve his powerful succor to those who have become worthy, and who are in the proper state to make it respected in their persons.

2. *Sincere humility.* Satan is the prince of pride: *Rex super universos filios superbiæ.* (JOB, XLI, 25.) We cannot overcome him by marching under his standards. To triumph over him, dispositions entirely contrary to his own—love of obscurity and of humiliation, diffidence of self and confidence in God are necessary. The Lord comes to the assistance of the humble, and is glad to exalt them. David seemed to be a child in the presence of Goliath, but he was humble; he put all his confidence in God and

Goliath fell at his feet: *Numquid non occidit gigantem et abstulit opprobrium de gente?* (Eccli., xlvii, 4.) St. Martin was a prodigy of humility, and all his life he was the scourge of hell. The name of the humble St. Vincent de Paul was sufficient to put the devil to flight, and to deliver a possessed person. On the contrary God is pleased to confound the proud. He abandons those who have self-confidence to their weakness and delivers those who invoke the Lord only with their lips, to the scorn of their enemies: *Jesum novi et Paulum scio, vos autem qui estis?* said the devil to the sons of Sceva. (Acts, xix, 15.)

3. A firm confidence in the power of Our Lord, in the prayers of the Church and in the assistance which it offers to us against the devil. If this confidence is wanting in us, what would be our faith in revealed doctrine? And without a lively and a fervent faith, what power could we have to triumph over the devil? The shield of Christians is faith, says the Apostle: *In omnibus sumentes scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere.* (Eph., vi, 16.) It is by faith that Satan is resisted, says St. Peter: *Cui resistite, fortes in fide.* (I Pet., v. 9.) Why were we not able to deliver this possessed person, and to drive out the devil? say the Apostles

to the Savior, at the foot of Mount Thabor? And He answers them: Because of your lack of faith: *Propter incredulitatem vestram.* (Matth., xvii, 19.) It is because you lack faith that you do not know how to pray, nor to humble yourselves, nor to do penance.

Third Point. Acknowledge before God your obligation of advancing in these virtues, and ask Our Lord to aid you to make progress in them. If they are not necessary for you to cast out the demons from bodies, because you do not have to exercise that function, they are nevertheless indispensable for you, because all your life you must cast those enemies out of souls, and heal the evils which are the usual consequences of their unfortunate tyranny: *Ut probabiles sitis medici Ecclesiæ, gratia curationum, virtuteque cœlesti confirmati.* (Pontif.)

In eremo in quo nunc habito, relates St. Peter Damian, *Prior quidam erat qui sui corporis imbecillitate confisus, sæpe jacens in lecto Completorium decurrebat. Accidit autem ut dæmoniacus quidam non procul adesset, qui multa hominum secreta revelabat. Cumque præfatus Prior dæmonem exire præciperet et exorcismi quæstionibus flagellaret: "Tune, inquit, ille es*

qui sub cotto quotidie Completorium insusurras? Et modo me quasi sanctus vis ejicere?" Hoc audito, frater erubuit, quia rei veritatem etiam per mendacii auctorem recognovit. (OPUSC., XXIV, 6.)

MEDITATION XXXVII.

THAT THE OFFICE OF EXORCIST IS OF A NATURE TO STRENGTHEN FAITH.

FIRST POINT. Adore the Son of God, preparing His Apostles for the ministry which they will have to exercise and notice the order in which He bestows His powers upon them. First He gives them external powers, the effect of which naturally excites attention: *Dedit illis potestatem spirituum immundorum, ut ejicerent eos.* (MATTH., X, 1.) The Apostles are, naturally, enraptured at the wonders which they perform. They rejoice to partake of the power of their Master, and to be able to command the devil in His name: *Reversi sunt dicentes: Domine, etiam dæmonia subjiciuntur nobis.* (LUC., X, 17.) It is in this manner that God disposes them to receive with faith, and to exercise with confidence other more precious and more sublime powers—*majora horum* (JOAN., XIV 12)—the effects of which are not visible,

tending directly to the *salvation* of souls. Such are the powers of confirming, of absolving, of consecrating, of blessing, etc. The Church having to communicate the same powers to you, proceeds in like manner. Pray to Our Lord that you may correspond with His designs, as the Apostles corresponded with them.

Second Point. Consider how the functions of exorcists are well adapted to strengthen faith in the truths of religion, in the efficacy of ordinations, and in the principles of Christian doctrine.

1. *In the truths of religion.* The deliverance of a single possessed person, or merely a well verified fact of possession suffices to place beyond doubt the most mysterious dogmas of revelation: the reality of an invisible world, the existence and the action of spiritual beings, outside of humanity, the certitude of another life in which personality will persevere, in which the wicked are punished in proportion to their wickedness. The existence of hell cannot be acknowledged without belief in all these things. The early Christians, after the example of the Apostles and of Our Lord, also gave as a palpable sign and a summary proof of the truth of Christianity their power of commanding the devil and of delivering

the possessed, as Jesus said to the Jews: *Si ego in spiritu Dei ejicio dæmonia, profecto pervenit in vos regnum Dei.* (MATTH., XII, 28.)

2. *In the reality of the powers conferred by ordination upon the ministers of the Church.* Since most of these powers are entirely spiritual, they remain concealed in the depth of the soul, and escape all eyes. Their very effect is invisible. Thus, for example, when a priest pronounces the words of absolution over a repentant sinner, the condition of the penitent will not seem changed. When, at Mass, he utters the formula of consecration over the bread and wine, the sensible appearances remain absolutely the same. When he administers extreme unction to a dying person, however well-disposed he may be, faith alone, assures us of the effect of the sacrament. But it is not the same in the case of exorcisms. If one, who is possessed is seen to be suddenly delivered at the voice of a minister of the Church, who can deny the action of a superhuman power? And if the power to act upon infernal spirits is proven to be in him who is honored by the sacrament of this order, how doubt the reality of those other powers which the Church attributes to him, though they may be

wholly invisible? It is precisely the argument which Jesus addressed to the Jews, and which we read in the Gospel: *Quid est facilius dicere paralytico: Dimittuntur tibi peccata tua, an dicere: Tolle grabatum tuum et ambula? Ut autem sciatis quia Filius hominis habet potestatem dimittendi peccata, tibi dico: Surge, etc.* (Marc., II, 10, 11.)

3. *In the principal points of the Christian doctrine.* Because all the dogmas are accepted as being revealed, and if Christianity have God for a guarantee, if it be an established fact, that the ministers of Jesus Christ are the instruments of His Spirit, it is impossible to doubt any part of revelation. Moreover the most ordinary functions of the exorcist partly suppose revelation, and naturally incline us to reflect upon it: for example, the use of holy water or the blessing of the water. How many revealed truths does not this practice imply? The efficacy of prayer, the power of the Church in the service of God, the existence of evil and malevolent spirits, the supernatural character of the priest, the power of the Holy Ghost, etc. Every time that holy water is used, an act of faith in these truths is at least implicitly made. Still, who does not know that faith, like all

virtues, is fortified in proportion as the acts of faith are multiplied? *Quilibet actus vel auget habitum vel disponit ad augmentum ipsius.* (S. Thom.)

Third Point. If you do not have to make solemn exorcisms, if you do not see with your own eyes the possessed delivered, you should not therefore have a less vivid faith in the power of exorcisms and the consequences which result from them. Besides, the miraculous cures which are related in the Gospel, there is a sufficient number of them in the history of the Church and in the "Lives of the Saints" to render doubt impossible, and impart full conviction. Study these facts; weigh with impartiality the evidence which attests them. Far from leading you to derision or distrust, this research will safeguard you against the prejudices of self-sufficient and railing minds. It will furnish you with arms with which to defend the doctrines and the practice of the Church against heresy and incredulity.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

AN ECCLESIASTIC SHOULD CONTEND ALL HIS LIFE AGAINST THE DEVIL.

First Point. Admire the zeal of the God-Man against Satan. He came upon earth to oppose him, and His entire life was spent in overthrowing his empire, and in breaking the yoke under which his slaves groan. When He died upon the cross, it was to complete the work of our redemption, and to free souls from the slavery of hell. Even today, He does not cease, from on high in heaven, to watch His enemy, and to suppress his revolts. He defends His Church and each of her members against him, as the armed strong man defends his house: *Custodit atrium suum.* (Luc., xi, 21.) *Et portæ inferi non prævalebunt adversus eam.* (Matth., xvi, 18.) That you may share in this work, He confers upon you the order of exorcist and calls you to the dignity of the priesthood. Considering, then, that you must also struggle all your life against the devil and, at the same time, work for God and for souls, ask Our Divine Savior for the sanctity, the strength, and the courage which will be necessary for you in order that you may correspond to your vocation.

SECOND POINT. Consider how the priest should strive against the devil.

1. *By the ministry of the word.* The reign of the devil, in the world, is that of the concupiscence of which he is the author: *Concupiscentia carnis, concupiscentia oculorum et superbia vitæ.* (I JOAN., II, 16.) It is thanks to this threefold bond that he entices minds into error, hearts into vice, and souls into hell. But what is the office of the priest, if not to fight against this triple concupiscence by refuting the maxims which it suggests, by denouncing the vices which it propagates, and by recalling the importance of salvation which it makes men forget. St. John has no other object in addressing his epistle to the early faithful. "I write to you, my children," he says to them, "in order that you may not permit yourselves to be shaken, nor to be seduced by the malice of the devil. The world passes with its concupiscence; but he who remains faithful to the law of God abideth forever:" *Scribo vobis, quoniam fortes estis, quoniam vicistis malignum. Nolite diligere mundum. Mundus transit et concupiscentia ejus: qui autem facit voluntatem Dei manet in æternum.* (I JOAN., II, 14.)

2. *By the sacraments which he confers.* When the

priest baptizes or absolves, he returns to souls the grace which Satan has taken from them, he withdraws them from the power of hell, to place them under the empire of Our Savior. He labors, then, directly against the devil. In the other sacraments, he always acts contrary to the interests of Satan, since he fortifies souls in grace, and aids them to advance in virtue. Thus Confirmation, by making the Christian perfect, disposes him to fight against all the enemies of God, visible or invisible; the Eucharist, nourishing him with divine food, sustains and develops his supernatural life; Holy Orders or Matrimony facilitates in the Christian, the fulfilment of the duties proper to his vocation; finally, Extreme Unction secures for him the strength to triumph in his last trials. The devil has a horror for all these sacraments, and employs every means to bring the faithful to neglect or to profane them.

3. *By the Sacrifice which he celebrates, by the prayers which he says, by the benedictions and the exorcisms which he pronounces.* These means of preservation and of sanctification produce effects greater or less according to the dispositions of those who have recourse to them; but their effects are always contrary

to the desires, efforts and interests of the devil. Even if, when employing them, one does not expressly invoke the assistance of God against Satan, he receives strength to resist the enemy of his soul as a necessary consequence of the grace which they convey.

THIRD POINT. An ecclesiastic has more reasons than anyone to say with Job that his life is a combat, and it is not against flesh and blood, that he has to strive the most: *Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum, contra spiritualia nequitiæ.* (EPH., XI, 12.) Ask Our Savior to fortify your heart and your hands for that formidable strife, while you await the day when He will consecrate them by the unction of His priesthood. Beseech Him to place in your soul, together with horror for Satan and his works, an indefatigable zeal to contend against him, in his person, his agents and his works. Howsoever great your ardor and your constancy may be, you must always fear, lest he may do more against you, than you will do against him: *Væ terræ et mari, quia descendit diabolus, habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus habet.* (APOC., XII. 11.) Do not forget, in

reciting the Psalms, that your great adversary, and the chief enemy of the Church, is Satan with his wretched angels. You cannot hate him too much, nor fear him too much, nor seek too earnestly for the succor of heaven against him.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

ST. MARTIN, MODEL OF THE EXORCIST.

First Point. After Our Savior the born enemy of Satan and his glorious conqueror, no one is more worthy of being proposed to the Exorcist, as a model, than St. Martin, the brave soldier of Christ. His birth obliged him to serve in the armies of the Empire. In that service he contracted the habits of abnegation, of firmness, of generosity, which are natural to the military state. But as soon as he was free to do so, he passed from under the standards of the emperor to those of Jesus Christ; and henceforth he fought no other enemies than those of God and of souls. He knew that new arms were necessary against these. When he received from St. Hilary, together with the order of exorcist, all the powers over the devil which Jesus Christ has bequeathed to His ministers he believed that he should apply him-

self more than ever to fortify his soul by all the practices of the spiritual life, and his existence became one long prayer, and a continual exercise of the highest virtues. Ask Our Lord that you may esteem, as this saint did, the order of Exorcist, with which you are honored, and that you may cherish its spirit, by a deep hatred of the devil and of his works, and by a great zeal for your own perfection and for that of your neighbor.

Second Point. The office of the exorcist is to cast out the devil from the bodies of the possessed, and to suppress his actions upon souls. Consider with what ardor and with what success St. Martin performed this twofold duty.

1. *St. Martin frequently had occasion to cast out the devil from the body of the possessed.* His biographers cite a certain number of examples. They testify, moreover, that he delivered many other demoniacs, that the energumens themselves had recourse to his power, and that no one had been seen to exercise such absolute dominion over the evil spirits: *Quoties adventurus erat*, says St. Sulpitius Severus, *videres energumenos, per totam ecclesiam, quasi adveniente judice, trepidare.* But what his biographers espe-

cially emphasize is the manner in which he proceeded in his exorcisms. He used neither reproaches, nor violence, nor arrogant, imperious commands: *Neminem manibus attrectabat, neminem sermonibus increpabat, sicut plerumque rotatur turba verborum.* His manner of acting was calmer and more religious. He closed the doors of the church, put on a hair-cloth and covered his head with ashes; then prostrating himself upon the earth, like a penitent who implores pardon, he addressed humble supplications to the Lord: *Foribus obseratis, cilicio circumtectus, cinere respersus, solo stratus orabat.* Thus it is by prayer, humility, and mortification that he exercised so astonishing a power over the devil, and became what, according to the Pontifical, a perfect exorcist should be: *Spiritualis imperator ad abigendos dæmones.* O admirable model, not less instructive than edifying! What can be more suitable to make you recognize the supernatural character of your Order, the authority which it confers upon you, and the virtues which you need to render it efficacious!

2. *St. Martin resisted with no less zeal and success the reign of the devil in souls.* In what does this reign consist? In the overthrow of the dominion of Our

Savior, in the revolt of man against God, in the opposition of our reason and of our will to the doctrine and law of the Sovereign Master. When mortal sin has entered into the soul, the evil spirit follows in its train. His power becomes strong if sin is suffered to remain there: *A quo quis superatus est, hujus est servus.* (I PET., II, 19.) If disorder spreads, if it becomes common and persistent, if it permeates customs and laws, the empire of the devil is extended in the family and in the State; it finally is taken as legitimate and indestructible. In the time of St. Martin there were heresy and infidelity: heresy which denied the Divinity of Our Savior together with His principal dogmas, infidelity which persisted in supporting all the extravagances and superstitions of paganism. St. Martin did not cease to fight against this twofold evil with the same arms with as much zeal as the devil himself. In his childhood, he had exposed himself to the rage of the Arians by confessing the Divinity of Our Savior; it was his zeal for the faith of the Church which had brought him to St. Hilary, the great champion of Catholic truth. Elevated against his will to the episcopate he employed all his energy to combat pagan errors

and observances. Knowing that evil doctrines are as deep rooted as noisome plants, he strove to extirpate them to the last vestige, by removing everything that could perpetuate the memory of them. Like King Ezechias "he broke the idols, destroyed their temples, pulled down their altars"—(IV Kings, xvii, 4.)—or rather by his miracles and his virtues, he induced even the most uncivilized peoples to destroy with their own hands those monuments of a sacrilegious worship, and soon they built upon their ruins monasteries and churches dedicated to the true God.

In this manner St. Martin showed himself to be a worthy Exorcist and a true soldier of Christ, *bonus miles Christi Jesu.* (II Tim., ii, 3.) Reflect on the way he followed, and the means he adopted to obtain this success. Before attacking the devil in the world, he had conquered him in himself. Before propagating the reign of Jesus Christ without, he had solidly established it in his own soul. He was penetrated with His spirit, and animated with His virtues. He had died to nature by abnegation, humility and penance; and we may say it was no longer he that lived or acted, but Jesus Christ who lived

and acted in him: *Totis visceribus diligebat Christum regem, et non formidabat imperii principatum.*

THIRD POINT. Such is the path which you should follow. You will have zeal and strength against the devil in proportion as you are dead to yourself, and united to Our Lord: *Discite vitiis imperare, ne in moribus vestris aliquid sui juris inimicus valeat vindicare. Tunc enim recte dæmonibus imperabitis in aliis, cum prius in vobis eorum multimodam nequitiam superaveritis.* (PONTIF.) Be humiliated to have fallen so often into the bonds of him whom you now must pursue and master, to have so often opened the entrance of your soul to him, whom you must cast out from the body and from the souls of your brethren. Promise Our Lord henceforth to have nothing but hatred and aversion for His enemy, and to incessantly oppose his works, his pomps, his agents, in a word, all that is of a nature to maintain his reign and favor his action. Remember the words of St. Martin, when he was dying: *Quid hic astas, cruenta bestia? Nihil in me, funeste, reperies.* You will be a worthy exorcist so long as you are able to speak thus to the devil. You will be a saint, if you can still repeat these words at the hour of your death.

SECTION V.

THE ORDER OF ACOLYTE.

MEDITATION XL.

PREROGATIVES OF THIS ORDER.

First Point. Adore the Incarnate Word, as the source of all greatness, of all wisdom, and of all perfection: *Quoniam in ipso complacuit omnem plenitudinem inhabitare.* (Col., i, 19.) *In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei absconditæ . . . In quo inhabitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter.* (Col., ii, 3, 9.) It is profitable, no less than honorable, to be affiliated with Him, for He desires only to communicate Himself to men, and those who approach nearest to Him have a greater share in the effusion of His graces: *Accedite ad eum et illuminamini.* (Ps. xxxiii, 6.) As the Archangel Raphael was glorified by being one of the seven spirits who stand in heaven, before the throne of God—*unus de septem* (Tob., xii, 15)—the ministers of the Church,

who make up the seven Orders of the hierarchy, should be grateful, for the position which their functions give them, before the altar, which is the throne of Our Savior upon earth. Consider then the rank which is given you in the sanctuary by the order of Acolyte, the most elevated of all after Sacred Orders. Ask Our Lord to make you appreciate this prerogative, and return humble acts of thanksgiving to Him.

Second Point. Reflect on the function which the Acolyte fills in relation to Our Lord. He recalls Him and represents Him under two aspects, as the light of the world and as the victim of the glory of God.

1. *As the light of the world.* The Word made flesh was for souls, what the sun is for bodies, the source of all light and of all life: *lux vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem.* (Joan., i, 9.) Each of His representatives is destined, like a torch, to propagate this light and to bestow this life: *Vos estis lux mundi. Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus.* (Matth., v, 14, 16.) But if this mission is common to all the ministers of Our Savior, whence comes it that the bishop seems to entrust it especially to the Acolyte? Why does he say to him, to him in particular, that

it is his duty and his office to enlighten and to animate his brethren: *Sint lucernæ ardentes in manibus vestris, ut filii lucis sitis.* It is that, besides the duty common to all, the Acolyte has in this connection—an obligation which is proper to him and which pertains to his office. He is obliged to make known and to render visible to the eyes of the faithful, the greatest and most profound of mysteries, the mystery of faith par excellence, the invisible presence of the Son of God in the Eucharist, and the reality of His sacrifice upon the altar. Therefore the bishop makes him understand that he has two functions to perform: First, to fulfil the ceremonial, by carrying before the Blessed Sacrament the candlestick which he entrusts to him, *ceroferarium cum cereo,* the light whose brightness is to recall the light that shines in darkness: *Lucernam ad monstrandum solem.* (St. Augustine.) Secondly, to give to the faithful the example of piety, of modesty, and of fervor which the real presence and the unbloody immolation of the Son of God, upon the altar require of them: *Studete igitur susceptum officium digne implere. Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus ut glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est. . . . Ut et vos et alios illuminetis. Non*

enim Deo placere poteritis, si lucem Deo manibus præferentes, operibus tenebrarum inserviatis et per hoc aliis exempla perfidiæ præbeatis. (PONTIF.)

2. *As the victim of the glory of God.* The acolyte has not only to carry the candlestick, a sign of the presence and of the mission of the Word made flesh, he is further appointed to offer the wine and the water at the altar for the Eucharistic Sacrifice: *Accipe urceolum, ad suggerendum vinum et aquam in eucharistiam sanguinis Christi.* In the performance of this function he reminds the faithful of the offering, which the Son of God made of Himself to His Father upon the altar of the cross: *Hoc enim fecit semel, seipsum offerendo.* (HEB., VII, 27.) *Per Spiritum sanctum semetipsum obtulit immaculatum Deo.* But he should recall it in a manner still more meritorious and impressive, by immolating himself with the divine Host, by uniting himself to His dispositions, and by being consumed like Him for the service and glory of the divine Majesty: *Tunc digne vinum suggeretis et aquam, si vos ipsi Deo sacrificium per castam vitam et bona opera oblati fueritis.* (PONTIF.) As the Savior, after being offered to His Father in His incarnation and presentation in the temple, made

a continual and incessant immolation of His life, the Acolyte should, likewise, habitually practice self-mortification and be consumed, like a heavenly torch in the flames of divine charity. Such is the true manner of glorifying God and of enlightening souls: *Crux est magnum candelabrum. Qui vult lucere, non erubescat de hoc ligneo candelabro.* (St. Augustine.)

Third Point. Acknowledge the excellence of the office which you are called to fill, and the sanctity which you need for the performance of your obligations: *Tenetur lucere,* says St. Jerome, *quem Dominus habere voluit officium lucernæ.* This view should inspire in you great gratitude but at the same time it should humble you and make you conscious of your indigence. Ask Our Lord to multiply in you the light which you are to diffuse into the souls of others, and the virtues necessary to make your conduct harmonize with your ministry: *Accende, Domine, mentes nostras et corda ad amorem gratiæ tuæ, ut illuminati vultu splendoris tui, fideliter tibi in sancta Ecclesia deservire possimus.* (Pontif.) Accept as your motto these words of Ecclesiasticus: *Gloria magna est sequi Dominum.* Δόξα μεγάλη ἀχολουθεῖν Θεῷ. (xxiii, 38.)

MEDITATION XLI.

THE HAPPINESS OF SERVING AT THE DIVINE SACRIFICE.

First Point. Adore the Lamb of God as St. John saw Him in heaven in the presence of His Father, in a state of glory and also of immolation. The multitude of the Blessed surround Him; and without losing sight of His divinity, without omitting any of the homages which is due to His greatness, the Elect and the angels join in the adoration which He offers to the Supreme Majesty: *Vidi, et ecce sedes posita erat in cœlo, et supra sedem sedens. Et ecce in medio Agnum stantem tanquam occisum. Et audivi vocem Angelorum multorum dicentium: Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est accipere virtutem, et divinitatem, et honorem, et gloriam, et benedictionem. Sedenti in throno et Agno benedictio, et honor, et gloria, et potestas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.* (Apoc., iv, 2; v, 6, 11.) Is this not, substantially, the sacrifice of the Savior, that divine sacrifice, that unique sacrifice, visible upon Calvary, but invisible upon the altar, the merits of which are infinite, and the fruit of which will endure as long as God Himself. Is it not thus that the God-Man will appear in heaven and that

we shall glorify His Father with Him for all eternity? While awaiting this happiness, ask of God a faith so vivid that it will take the place of the sight of these wonders, and endeavor to develop in yourself the sentiments of religion, of admiration, of gratitude with which this sight will one day fill your soul.

Second Point. *Consider how honorable and advantageous is the office of Acolyte in the Holy Sacrifice.*

1. *What is more honorable?* (1) The angels, according to St. Chrysostom, consider it an honor to assist at the divine sacrifice. They contemplate with admiration the infinite humiliation of the King of Kings, and they join in His sentiments towards His Father and towards men. They endeavor to raise Him from His abasement by their reverence and by their homage. "Do not doubt the presence of the angels," says St. Ambrose, "when you see the Son of God immolated upon the altar." *Ne dubitas assistere Angelum, quando Christus assistit, quando Christus immolatur.* If it is an honor for the celestial spirits to approach the divine Lamb, and to be present at His immolation, what glory is it not for you to have to serve Him, to coöperate in the celebration of His Sacrifice and to help Him, in a way, in this great mani-

festation of His love for His Father and of His zeal for souls! (2) It was one of the principal privileges of the well beloved Apostle to be chosen to occupy the place of the faithful at the foot of the cross, by the side of the Most Holy Virgin; for he was the representative of all Christians at the sacrifice of Calvary, according to the opinions of the most pious Doctors, and it was in this capacity that he united himself with the intentions of Our Savior and received His last word: *Ecce mater tua.* (JOAN., XIX, 27.) Why should it not be an honor for you to represent the same faithful at the sacrifice of the altar, to exemplify their union with the sentiments of the divine victim, and finally to solicit and obtain for them the blessings which are the fruit of His immolation? Such is the great function of the Acolyte. It would suffice to merit for him this title, which St. Paul gives to the Savior Himself: *Sanctorum minister et tabernaculi veri quod fixit Deus et non homo.* (HEB., VIII, 2.)

2. *What is more advantageous?* All the faithful partake of the fruits of the sacrifice of the Mass if they put no obstacle in the way of its efficacy but there are some who participate therein more abundantly,

either by reason of their office, and of the rights which it confers upon them, or in virtue of the prayers offered up for them because of their special dispositions. Now these different reasons concur in favor of the Acolyte or of him who fills his office. (1) Without coöperating in the holy sacrifice as closely as the sacred ministers, he is allowed to contribute to the oblation, and his ministry suffices, according to Suarez, to assure him of a special share in the graces which are merited, by this oblation. (2) He is naturally first in the special recommendation which the celebrant makes, *pro omnibus circumstantibus.* (3) Who should feel more than he the sentiments of the divine Host? Who can more easily unite with the prayers of the priest? Who should be more inclined to make acts of faith, humility, religion, charity and petition? Approaching so intimately the divine Lamb, contemplating Him with his eyes, in His state of immolation, is it possible for him to remain unmoved by what he sees, and can he fail to render himself worthy of the most abundant blessings? *Vix fieri potest*, says St. Bonaventure, *quin Dominus speciali gratia remuneret etiam in præsenti vita eum qui libenter et devote ministrat ad illud sacrificium.*

THIRD POINT. O my Savior, when I think of the reality of Your presence, and of the merits of Your sacrifice, I understand without difficulty what I read in the lives of so many holy priests, that to say Mass was their delight, and that they considered themselves honored to fill the most humble offices in this celebation of the divine Mysteries. These priests had a vivid and firm faith. When they saw You, You the Son of the living God, the King of heaven and of earth, immolate Yourself before their eyes, for the glory of Your Father, they felt bound to sacrifice and humble themselves before the divine Majesty: *Ante Dominum vilior fiam plus quam factus sum*, they said, *et ero humilis in oculis meis.* (II REG., VI, 21.) O divine Master, give me a faith like theirs! Like them I will enter into Your dispositions; and, after their example, I will place my happiness in humbling myself like you, and in being immolated with You.

St. Michael de Sanctis, canonized by Pius IX, had during his whole life, the most ardent devotion for the Holy Sacrifice. When in the novitiate he obtained permission to be acolyte every day and to serve as many Masses as he could. He employed his mornings in this office. He did not tire of it, it

was, on the contrary, the source of very sweet consolations for him. From the expression of his countenance, especially from the consecration until the communion, one would say that Our Lord had visibly appeared to him. Pious Christians flocked to the Masses which he served, to be edified by his angelic modesty and recollection.

MEDITATION XLII.

THAT AN ECCLESIASTIC SHOULD HAVE A GREAT DEVOTION FOR THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

First Point. Adore the Son of God, crowning the prodigies of His charity by the institution of the Holy Eucharist: *Sciens quia venit hora ejus, cum dilexisset suos, in finem dilexit eos.* (Joan., xv, 1.) By one act and in the same mystery, He confers upon us three gifts of an infinite value: the Blessed Sacrament, the holy sacrifice, and the divine priesthood. Nothing will ever separate what He has been pleased to unite. As the sacrament of the Eucharist can exist only by the holy sacrifice, the holy sacrifice and the Blessed Sacrament can only be produced by the priesthood, and the priesthood is established only to perpetuate the sacrifice and the Eucharist. Such

is the pledge of love which our Savior has left to His disciples, and especially bequeathed to His ministers. He seemed to be unable to separate Himself from them. No longer able to live here below under a sensible form, He conceals Himself under the Eucharistic veils, in order to remain by their side, under their eyes, and within their hands, until the consummation of the world. He gives them the privilege of appealing to Him, and the power to produce Him in every place where they feel the desire to offer Him and to receive Him. Thank this divine Savior for having chosen you for a like power, and so close a union with Him. Think what love such generosity attests, what gratitude it deserves, and ask Him for His grace in order to correspond with His designs.

Second Point. Consider the special reasons which oblige an ecclesiastic to love and honor the Holy Eucharist.

1. *It is his glory.* All sanctity, all power, and all greatness reside in Our Lord. Outside of Him there is only misery, imperfection, and insignificance: *Tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.* What is it that made the glory of the second temple, and which raised it in the esteem of

the prophet, above that of Solomon? It is that Our Lord, the desired of nations, honored it by His presence: *Veniet desideratus cunctis gentibus, et magna erit gloria domus istius magis quam primæ.* (AGG., II, 10.) Whence comes the superiority of the Church over the Synagogue, of the people of the New Covenant over that of the Old, if it be not from the God-Man, from the Word Made Flesh, Whom the Christian people have as founder, pontiff and king? *Nomen civitatis ex illa die: Dominus ibidem.* (EZEC., XLVIII, 35.) *Non enim accessistis ad tractabilem montem et accensibilem ignem, sed accessistis ad Sion montem et civitatem Dei viventis, Jerusalem cœlestem et testamenti novi mediatorem Jesum et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel.* (HEB., XII, 18, 22.) And we ministers of the New Law, why does our priesthood surpass the Mosaic priesthood, as the reality surpasses the shadow, if it is not that we offer to the eternal Father, in Jesus Christ His Son, a Victim, pure, holy, and undefiled, of whom carnal victims were but figures, and whose blood has power to purify the entire universe: *purificans per sanguinem crucis ejus, sive quæ in terris, sive quæ in cœlis sunt?*

2. *It is his consolation.* If the priest were forsaken in the exercise of the holy ministry, if he beheld himself alone, without support, without associates, how much would he be exposed to discouragement! *Væ soli, quia, cum ceciderit, non habet sublevantem se!* (Eccl., iv, 10.) His consolation and his strength is to have a friend at hand, another self, more constant, more wise and more loving than he, always willing to assist him in his trials, to encourage him in his weariness, to console him in his sadness. And where does he find this precious friend, this faithful friend, whose devotedness remedies all evils, whose affection is the pledge of all goodness, who procures for the body, as for the soul, salvation and immortality? In Our Lord, the Host of the holy tabernacle, the Bread of the holy table, and the Victim of the divine sacrifice. *Jam non dicam vos servos,* says He to His disciples; *vos autem dixi amicos.* (Joan., xv, 14.) Every morning He comes to renew their youth, and to gladden their heart. Thus the priest finds a help in his weakness: *Habet sublevantem se.* The Eucharist is his treasure, the altar becomes his delight, and with his whole soul, he says with the psalmist: *Quid mihi est in cœlo et a te quid volui*

super terram? (Ps. LXXII, 25.) *Altaria tua, Domine virtutum rex meus et Deus meus.*) (Ps. LXXXVIII, 4.)

3. *It should be his life.* "I am the bread of life," says Our Savior; "In me true life is found:" *Ego sum panis vivus. Ego sum panis vitæ: qui manducat me et ipse vivet propter me.* (JOAN., VI, 41, 55.) If these words of the Son of God are anywhere to be realized, if they are ever to produce their effect, is it not in His ministers? Who beholds the Savior more closely than they? Who is better able to know Him? Who is united to Him more frequently, more intimately? Who can have more reason to say with the Apostle: *Vivo, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus?* (GAL., II, 29.)

THIRD POINT. My God, if there are difficulties and trials in the ecclesiastical career, there are also great advantages and consolations: *Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit. Parasti in conspectu meo mensam.* (Ps. XXII, 15.) I have chosen you as my inheritance, and I hope to rejoice with you in eternity; but even now you give yourself to me in an inexpressible manner in the Eucharist: *Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris.* (Ps., XV, 6.) *Et calix meus inebrians, quam præclarus est!* (Ps. XXII, 3.) O Lord, make

me appreciate such goodness and strive to profit by it. For this purpose, give me an ardent and firm faith in your presence, a profound respect for your greatness, and a boundless gratitude for your generous love:

Panis vivus, vitam præstans homni,
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere,
In te spem habere, te diligere.

Da Ponte, so well known by his Meditations upon Faith, daily made several visits to the Blessed Sacrament and spent before the altar as much time as he could. During the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi, he seemed unable to come out of the church. *Regina Austri surget in judicio,* said he, *quia venit a finibus terræ audire sapientiam Salomonis: et ecce plus quam Salomon hic!* If we did for this divine Master, what that queen did for Solomon, what is said of her, would be said of us: *Dedit ei rex omnia quæ voluit et petivit ab eo, multoque plura quam attulerat ad eum.*" (III Reg., x, 14; II Par., ix, 12.)

MEDITATION XLIII.

THE UNHAPPINESS OF AN ECCLESIASTIC WHO IS WITHOUT DEVOTION FOR THE EUCHARIST.

First Point. Adore the Son of God grieving, during His mortal life, over the blindness of His compatriots, and over the abuse which He saw them make of His most precious graces. Oh! if you knew the gift which God offers to you; said He: *Si scires donum Dei et quis est qui loquitur tecum!* (Joan., iv, 10.) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou couldst understand, in this thy day the things that are for thy peace! *Si cognovisses et tu, et quidem in hac die tua, quæ ad pacem tibi.* (Luc., xix, 49.) Oh! if you had sufficient faith, humility and confidence to come to ask Me for the repose which you lack! But you do not wish to come to Me! *Non vultis venire ad me ut vitam habeatis.* (Joan., v, 40.) Are not these the sentiments which are aroused in the heart of Our Lord, by those of His ministers who lack devotion for His Sacrament, who seem indifferent to His presence, and insensible to His love? Beseech Him to preserve you from such blindness, and promise never to sadden Him by such infidelity.

Second Point. Consider the peril of an ecclesiastic who is without devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. He is exposed:

1. *To the danger of losing all taste for his functions.* The Eucharist is the center of religion, and the great object of the priesthood and of Holy Orders. If all the functions of worship, if all the practices of religion, of faith, of gratitude, and of love have not for their end to honor it, it is at any rate the thought of this mystery, the remembrance of the Savior dwelling amongst us, which inspires them or which is their soul. And hence as long as an ecclesiastic has in his heart true devotion towards the Eucharist, all the functions of his Order are full of attraction for him. In performing them, he seems occupied with what he loves; he follows the inspiration of his heart even more than the dictates of his conscience. In him is verified the saying of St. Augustine: *Ubi amatur, non laboratur. Non est labor, sed sapor.* But if love for the Blessed Sacrament grows cold, if devotion for the Eucharist decreases, what happens? No doubt the same practices are observed and the same functions are fulfilled, because duty or custom require it, but it is easy to see

that he is no longer led by the same spirit, that the same sweetness is no longer found therein. It is a debt which is paid, it is a duty which is performed. Attention and effort are required to keep him faithful. Now, is not this coolness, this languor, this lack of relish and attraction in the performance of the most sacred duties, a source of uneasiness and suffering for an ecclesiastic?

2. *To the danger of becoming lax.* Much energy and constancy are necessary in order to persevere with fidelity in all the practices of piety. Now, can we expect to find these dispositions in an eclesiastic who has little devotion for the Eucharist, who lives close to the holy tabernacle without thinking of Him who resides there; who is not impressed by the Holy Sacrifice, who receives Our Lord, and remains unmoved by His grandeur and untouched by His love, who prays to Him only rarely and coldly, even at communion and during his thanksgiving? Is it not to be feared that he will neglect himself, give way to dissipation and tepidity? And if he falls into this state, what must he expect? Weariness, distaste, and a troubled conscience which always follows remissness. He will feel that he abuses the graces of which

he is the recipient, that he is not doing right to love so little Him Who shows us such great love, that to have in the heart sentiments so different from those which he professes, is to lack sincerity: *Si incipis tepescere, incipies male agere,* says the Imitation (I, 25.)

3. *Even to the risk of falling into sin and to become hardened in evil.* It is a serious position for one to be in the alternative of performing many acts of virtue and acquiring great merits, or of violating grave obligations, and falling into great sins. Such is the position of an ecclesiastic, who is obliged to pass his life close to Our Lord in the exercise of the most sacred functions: *Aut summa perfectio aut summa damnatio.* Happy are they who approach the divine Sacrament with constant faith and fervor. They continually draw new graces from Our Savior and they do not cease to advance in the way of virtue. But woe to them who do not duly honor so holy a mystery, who do not discern therein the body and blood of the Son of God, who do not strive to receive them with purity and love! *Væ illis quibus corporis Christi dispensatio credita est, si non dijudicant corpus Christi, si non honorant Testamenti novi mediatorem*

Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem, melius loquentem quam Abel!

THIRD POINT. I realize, O my God, that without a sincere and lively devotion for the Blessed Sacrament, an ecclesiastic is in danger of failing soon in the duties of his vocation, and in the rules of the priestly life. Those who depart from You, go to their destruction: *Qui se elongant a te, Domine, peribunt.* (PS. LXXII, 27.) But if I do not solidly establish this devotion in my soul during my seminary course, how shall I secure it later? How shall I preserve it amongst the preoccupations and the difficulties of the ministry? Put it in my heart, O my God. Make it increase in my soul from day to day. Animate the faith in Your presence, which you have given me, augment the reverence which Your greatness inspires in me, and fill me with a more and more sincere gratitude for Your favors. *Tribue, quæsumus, ita nos corporis et sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari ut redemptionis tuæ fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus.* (S. THOM.) If we had the faith of the saints," said the Curé of Ars, "we would see Our Lord as they did. There are priests who see Him every day upon the altar. But our faith is so weak

that it always leaves us a hundred miles from its object. For us, Jesus Christ seems to always be withdrawn to the third heaven. Thus can they say of our soul, what was written of the place in which He lived: *Non poterat ibi virtutem ullam facere, et mirabatur, propter incredulitatem eorum.*" (MARC., VI, 5, 6.)

MEDITATION XLIV.

AN ACOLYTE SHOULD STRIVE TO EDIFY THE FAITHFUL.

FIRST POINT. See how much the Church desires that the life of her ministers should be exemplary. At each step they take in the course of Orders, she warns them that they incur a stricter obligation of edifying their brethren. She tells the Ostiary that he should endeavor to attract souls to God by his example and by his conversation. She recommends the Lector to put into practice the doctrine of which he is the organ, and to confirm his instructions by his conduct. She warns the Exorcist, that he should be at the head of the faithful in the struggles which they maintain against the devil. She demands still more from the Acolytes, who are the highest in the

hierarchy after the sacred ministers. She wishes that their virtue should be sufficiently manifest and perfect to show the faithful the way of sanctity, and to incite them to advance in it. She says to them, as the Savior says to the Apostles: that they are the light of the world, that they should shed the same brightness in the midst of its darkness that the heavenly bodies give out in the middle of the night. And that they may not forget this obligation the Church gives them a sensible reminder of it; she wishes that they carry it in their hands, and that they never exercise the functions of their office without having it before their eyes: *Accipe ceroferarium cum cereo*. Thank Our Lord for this advice and admonition. Ask Him to give you a proper sense of your duty in this regard, and to bestow upon you the grace to do it well.

Second Point. Nothing is more essential than good example. It is by His example that Our Lord causes virtue to spring up upon earth. It is by example that the Apostles propagated it. It is by example that you should foster it and cause it to thrive in souls.

1. It is by example especially that the divine Master taught virtue and inspired its practice. The

Holy Spirit remarks that His examples preceded His discourses, and that He commenced by doing what He wished to teach: *Legimus quod cœpit Jesus facere et docere.* (St. Jer.) "Come to me," said He to those who listened to Him, "I shall show you the way and you shall have only to follow me:" *Venite ad me, omnes.* (Matth., iv, 19.) Take my yoke upon you. We shall carry it together; we shall walk with the same step and by the same road: *Tollite jugum meum super vos.* (Matth., xi, 29.) I wish to be your companion, your guide, and your model in all things: *Exemplum dedi vobis, ut quemadmodum ego feci, ita et vos faciatis.*" (Joan., xiii, 15.) He finally chose a certain number of disciples; but to train them in the way of perfection it was necessary that He should walk before them, that He should practice the virtues in a heroic degree, that He should persevere in them even unto death. It is after having realized the extent of His zeal for the glory of His father, His love for sinners, His patience, His meekness, and His humility; it is after having seen Him immolate Himself upon Calvary and die upon the cross that the nations placed confidence in His maxims and accepted His law: *Crux Christi mag-*

num fuit candelabrum. (St. Augustine.) Owing to His cross, His sanctity is apparent to all eyes; it has dispelled all darkness, and according to His word, has drawn the whole world to His feet: *Cum exaltatus fuero, omnia traham ad me ipsum.* (Joan., xii, 32.)

2. It is by their example also, more than by their preaching, that the Apostles propagated the Gospel and brought about so many conversions. "Behold St. Paul," says St. Chrysostom, the great admirer of the great Apostle, "what wonders he accomplished in the service of Jesus Christ and what marvellous fruits the Church has gathered from his Apostolate! But whence came the power of his word and the success of his preaching? Is it from his eloquence? No; it is from his sanctity; it is from the share which he had in the spirit and in the virtues of his divine Master:" *Non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis.* (I Cor., ii, 4.) At the same time that he preached the doctrine of the Savior, he walked in His footsteps, he imitated His examples, he was associated with His sacrifice and he attached himself to the cross: *In ipso candelabro lucebat etiam Apostolus, quando dicebat: Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri*

Jesu Christi. (St. Augustine.) It was the same with the other apostles and all the evangelical workers. They obtained the confidence of the people and wrought their conversion only by making themselves models. Never would they have been able to gain them otherwise. It is one thing to sow, says the divine Master, and another thing to reap. Some there are who sow in vain. (Mich., vi, 15.) They are those who say and do not. And there are some who reap a hundred-fold, they are the men who are filled with the Spirit of God and whose life as well as their doctrine is wholly heavenly: *Messores angeli Dei sunt.* (Matth., xiii, 39.)

3. It is also by edifying, by giving an example of virtue, that you will be able to contribute to the sanctification of souls and to procure glory for God. In all positions, in the priesthood itself, good example is the primary condition for doing good: *Gravitate actuum probent se seniores,* says the bishop in speaking of priests. *Virtutes in se ostendant, exemplo probent, admonitione confirment.* (Pontif.) But in the Minor Orders especially, this condition is indispensable. It is indeed the only means by which an Acolyte can act upon souls. He does not preach

like the Deacon; he does not give the people the word of God like the Sub-deacon and Lector. How then can he instruct and exhort if not by his example? Let him then use this, the most powerful of all means. Let him speak to the eyes, instead of to the ears. If he is not able to announce the Savior as the angels announceed Him to the shepherds let him announce Him as the star announced Him to the Magi: *Si non potest esse angelus, sit saltem stella.* (PET. DAM.) But let him pay attention to one thing: that good works, when they are the only form of preaching, must shine more brightly to produce an effect. This is why Moses, who had not, like Aaron, the gift of speech, had received from God in compensation, a kind of a halo which impressed the Israelites and inspired them with respect for his laws.

THIRD POINT. Carefully avoid all irregularity and immodesty in your exterior; for what infidelity it would be on your part to turn away from perfection those whom you should edify, *si lucem Deo præferentes, operibus tenebrarum inserviretis et per hoc aliis exempla perfidiæ præberetis?* (PONTIF) But it is not enough, not to scandalize. Your conduct must awaken the remembrance of God and rever-

ence for His divine Majesty; you must be a model of modesty, of charity, of meekness, and of humility for everybody: *Exemplum esto fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in caritate, in fide, in castitate.* (I Tim., iv, 12.) Profit by every opportunity which presents itself of giving an example of virtue, and let no means of being useful to your brethren escape you: *Estote solliciti in omni justitia et bonitate et veritate, ut et vos et alios et Dei ecclesiam illuminetis.* (Pontif.) Finally often ask God for the assistance of His grace, by repeating this prayer which will be said for you at your ordination: *Hunc famulum tuum benedicere dignare in ordine Acolytharum, quatenus lumen visible manibus præferens, lumen quoque spirituale moribus præbeat.* (Pontif.) "While a statue is in the workshop, little attention is paid to the defects which it may have. It is known that since it is not finished, it cannot be perfect. But it is different when it is seen in the place it is to occupy. It is examined with care, and its least imperfections are the subject of criticism. It is the same for ecclesiastics, when they are ordained, and when they exercise their ministry, either in the Church or in the world." (Bourdoise.)

MEDITATION XLV.

AN IMPERFECT LIFE IN AN ECCLESIASTIC IS A CONTRADICTION AND A SHAME.

First Point. Adore the Son of God, who is truth and perfection itself, reproaching the Doctors of the synagogue for the hypocrisy of their conduct. They had many other defects, but what aroused Him the most, what He stigmatized with the most energy, is the contrast which He saw between their words and their dispositions, between the corruption of their hearts and the signs of sanctity which they assumed. *Væ vobis*, said He, *scribæ et pharisæi hypocritæ* (Matth., xxiii, 14); and eight times afterwards He repeated this terrible imprecation. So hateful is hypocrisy to this divine Master, and such indignation it provokes on His part! Notice also the care which He took to inspire His Apostles with horror for it: in their presence He pronounced this imprecation and He caused it to be inserted in His Gospel. Ask Him to give you such an aversion for this vice, that you will avoid even the appearance of it, and that you will expose yourself to every danger, rather than become guilty of it.

SECOND POINT. Consider what a contradiction and what hypocrisy it would be to receive Holy Orders, and to perform the functions thereof, without having the desire to lead a holy life.

1. The ecclesiastical state is essentially a state of perfection. There is no state more perfect, whose end and functions are more holy. To enter it freely is, then, to profess to embrace virtue and to aspire to sanctity. *Clericus duas res professus est*, said St. Augustine: *clericatum et sanctitatem.* This being the case, if you were to neglect to sanctify yourself in this state, if you were not to propose to advance in virtue, if you were satisfied to remain just as imperfect as persons who make no pretentions to leading a holy life, and to remain in the dissipation and tepidity of your early youth, what would be thought of you, and what conclusions would be drawn from your conduct? That in taking God for your portion you had not within the dispositions which you outwardly professed, that your profession was a dissimulation and a lie, so that you must be included among the hypocrits whom the Apostle stigmatized: *Habentes quidem speciem pietatis, virtutem autem ejus abnegantes* (II TIM., III, 5), and whose duplicity deserves,

in the opinion of St. Augustine, a double chastisement: *Simulata sanctitas, duplex est iniquitas.*

2. Your exterior, your tonsure, your clothing, the insignia of your Orders, all announce sanctity in you; *Clamat vestis, clamat professio sanctitatem.* Such is the wish of the Church, and you know the reasons for it. But under this appearance of sanctity should we not expect to find a saint, or at least a man who is laboring to become one? What if we were wrong? What would be thought of you, if your dispositions and your habits were opposed to this exterior which is so edifying? Would not what Our Lord said to the Pharisees be said of you? Having taken these insignia, it is necessary to have the sentiments which they express, it is necessary to acquire the virtues which they signify. *Pharisæe cæce, munda prius quod intus est.* (MATTH., XXIII, 26.) Will not your tonsure and your sacred vestments recall the phylacteries of those false Doctors, and the beautiful maxims which were written upon their garments or worn upon their foreheads, but which were far from being engraven upon their hearts! "Alas!" said St. Jerome, "the spirit of the Pharisees has not died with them." *Væ vobis*

ad quos vitia Pharisæorum transierunt! "Do we not see remnants of it in those sanctimonious women who value so much a piece of the true cross or beautiful Gospels, but who make so little effort to understand the maxims of Jesus Christ, and to mortify their flesh?" On their part, however, this may be only eccentricity, lack of knowledge, superstition. But would not what is in them illusion or caprice, be in you a mark of duplicity? And is not duplicity in such matters hypocrisy? *In Ecclesia, quisquis se vult videri quod non est, hypocrita est.* (St. Augustine.)

3. Finally even the functions of your Orders, being acts of religion, zeal, and love of God and of your neighbor, testify to holy dispositions. Thus the Ostiary in taking care of the church, and in calling the faithful to it, shows his zeal for the glory of the divine Majesty. The Lector, in making himself the mouth-piece of revealed truth implies that he is penetrated with it and desires to fill others with it. Should not the Exorcist, who, on account of his office is the antagonist of the devil, be the enemy of every form of sin? Does not the Acolyte, who serves at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, manifest his faith in,

and his devotion for the Eucharist? So, by the ministry which you exercise, you make profession of virtue and perfection. If you do not wish to be reproached with imposing on the faithful, and showing yourself better than you are, you must cultivate in your heart the sentiments, the habits, and the good dispositions, which your functions presuppose, and which you are in duty bound to practice.

THIRD POINT. Understand now why the bishop recommends that you should be clothed with true justice and sanctity: *justitia et sanctitate veritatis*, and realize how far you should be the model of your brethren in all virtue and in all truth: *in omni bonitate et veritate?* Know also the perfidy against which he wishes you to be on your guard in the exercise of your charge. *Non enim Deo placere poteritis, si lucem Deo manibus præferentes operibus tenebrarum inserviatis et per hoc aliis exempla perfidiæ præbeatis.* (PONTIF.) It is your duty to edify the faithful, to increase their faith, and to animate their fervor. This is what God expects of you in return for His graces. Do not disappoint Him, but respond to His confidence. Apply yourself to the practice of solid virtues. Do not fear to enter upon the path

of perfection. He who calls you to this high state and desires you to lead your brethren into it, will sustain your ardor and give you all the necessary assistance: *Sint lumbi vestri præcincti et lucernæ ardentes in manibus vestris. Abjiciatis opera tenebrarum. Ut filii lucis ambulate.* (PONTIF.) Remember these words of St. Bernard, about ecclesiastics who are without virtue: *Qui magis impius, profitens impietatem, an mentiens sanctitatem? Nonne is qui, etiam mendacium addens, geminat impietatem?*

MEDITATION XLVI.

ST. ALOYSIUS, PATRON OF THOSE IN MINOR ORDERS.

FIRST POINT. Our Lord is the first model, and the source of all sanctity, but He is not the only one who is worthy of our imitation. Under Him, there are the saints, men filled with His spirit, formed after His image, who give us an example of all the virtues. We find a great number of them in every walk of life, but especially in the ecclesiastical and religious state. Let us honor, from the bottom of our hearts, these worthy ministers of Our Savior, and let us thank the divine Master for having preserved for us the

account of their lives. *Laudemus viros gloriosos et parentes nostros in generatione sua, homines divites in fide, pulchritudinis studium habentes, quorum pietates non defuerunt.* (Eccli., xliv, 1, 3.) Their example remains after them, as a light for the mind and a stimulant for the heart. "Why should I not become," one says to himself, "in the age in which I live, in the position which I occupy, with the means which I have at my disposal, or which are offered to me, what others have become before me?" A multitude of ecclesiastics have owed their salvation and their perfection to this consideration. Do you not see in it a motive for encouragement and perseverance?

Second Point. Consider how St. Aloysius practiced the virtues proper to Minor Orders to which he had been promoted.

1. What are the virtues of the Ostiary? A profound sense of religion, a great love for the house of God, and an ardent zeal for His worship. The life of this Saint offers us many indications of these virtues. Who more than he had the right to say to the Lord: *Dilexi decorem domus tuæ et locum habi-*

tationis gloriæ tuæ? Etenim passer invenit sibi domum et turtur nidum ubi ponat pullos suos. Altaria tua, Domine virtutum! Quia melior est dies una in atriis tuis super millia! Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum. (Ps. LXXXIII, 4, 11.) The Psalmist is happy to have preferred the House of God to the tents of sinners. St. Aloysius abandoned for it the palace of his ancestors, the society of his parents, and the domains which soon were to fall to him.

2. The virtues proper to the Lector are the love of the Sacred Scriptures and application to the sacred studies. This Saint did not wait till he left the world to apply himself to them. He always preferred them to profane reading, however interesting the latter might be: *Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes,* said he with David; *sed non ut lex tua.* (Ps. CXVIII, 25.) But once free to follow his vocation, he had no longer any other occupation than spiritual works and ecclesiastical studies; and such was the ardor with which he read them, and such were the blessings which he knew how to draw down upon his work, that without curtailing any of his exercises of piety, without

losing any of his fervor, he was soon able to appear, with honor in the most celebrated schools and merit the approbation of the most learned Doctors.

3. The characteristic of the Exorcist is a horror of sin and of everything which offends the sanctity of God. This was also one of the principal traits of St. Aloysius. On the evidence of Bellarmin, to whom he had opened the secrets of his conscience, never had he the misfortune of offending God mortally, nor of committing any deliberate fault of any gravity. Nevertheless he reproached himself for his unfaithfulness, he distrusted his own strength. He was as vigilant over all his movements, and as restrained in the use of his senses, as if he had had a thousand times the experience of his weakness: *Adjecit sensuum custodiæ corporis cruciatum.* (Brev.) The Church can propose him as a model of penance and of mortification to those who have not always followed in the way of innocence: *Concede, quæsumus, ut innocentem non secuti, pœnitentem imitemur.*

4. Finally, who ever practiced in a more exemplary manner the virtues of the Acolyte, devotion to the divine Sacrifice, and holy modesty? The only honor which he ever desired was that of serving the priest

at the altar. He publicly performed this office at the wedding of his brother Rodolf. It was the only favor which seemed to particularly please him during his novitiate. As regards his modesty, it suffices to say that from his early youth it astonished everybody. Neither dissipation, nor anger, nor vain curiosity were ever remarked in his exterior. When he was taking his course of theology at Rome, he was often followed, without his knowing it, for the edification which his presence brought everywhere.

THIRD POINT. You see in this young saint, called like you to the first functions of the ecclesiastical state, and whom God crowned before his entry into Sacred Orders, an admirable example of all the virtues of those in Minor Orders. His perfect practice of these was sufficient to merit heaven, and to cause him to be honored as a saint in the Church. Let him then be your model, and let his name always recall to you piety, love of holy studies, horror of sin, and the modesty which you have to practice. Let him be also your protector; for he has no less influence to obtain the graces of God for those who solicit them by his intercession, than zeal to propagate

the virtues which were most dear to him. *Cœlesti convivio fac nos, Domine, nuptiali veste indutos accumbere, quam B. Aloysii pia præparatio et juges lacrymæ inestimabilibus ornabant margaritis.* (ORAT. ECCLES.)

MEDITATION XLVII.

THE SENTIMENTS WHICH BEFIT ONE WHO HAS RECEIVED HOLY ORDERS.

FIRST POINT. Think of the sentiments of the Precursor, visited by Our Lord before his birth and instructed by the Holy Spirit regarding the ministry which he was to undertake. What humble gratitude! What transports of joy, of admiration, and of love! *Exultavit in gaudio.* (LUC., I, 44.) Let us judge his dispositions by those of Zachary, announcing the destiny of his son, and extolling beforehand the great works which he would perform: *Et tu puer, propheta Altissimi vocaberis: præibis enim ante faciem Domini parare vias ejus, ad dandam scientiam salutis plebi ejus in remissionem peccatorum.* Let us judge them by the words of St. John himself, when Our Savior came to him upon the banks of the Jordan, and asked to be baptized by him: *Prohi-*

bebat eum dicens: Ego a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me? (MATTH., III, 14.) *Amicus sponsi gaudio gaudet propter vocem sponsi! Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui!* (JOAN., III, 30.) Nothing is more fitting than these sentiments. Nothing is more just. Still the Precursor was far from being as privileged as you. His vocation was far from being as holy, and his ministry was far from being as glorious as yours: *Qui minor est in regno cœlorum major est illo.* (LUC., VII, 28.) What would he have said, what would he have done, if the Son of God had allowed him to partake of His priesthood; if he had deigned to chose him, as He has chosen you, to offer His sacrifice to the Lord and to apply to souls the fruit of His mysteries?

SECOND POINT. There are especially three sentiments which ordination should leave in your soul:

1. *Deep gratitude.* However well a man may have prepared for ordination, it is always a gratuitous favor and a sign of predilection on the part of God. At no time was it a small honor and a slight advantage to be consecrated to the worship of the Lord and to coöperate in the holy mysteries: *Audite, filii Levi. Num parum vobis est quod separavit*

Deus ab omni populo et junxit sibi, ut serviretis ei et staretis coram frequentia populi et ministraretis ei? (Num., xvi, 9.) But this privilege and honor are incomparably greater under the reign of the Savior than they were under the law of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron. Since, then, the graces received are more gratuitous and more precious, should not gratitude for them be more sincere, generous and permanent? *Cui multum datum est, multum quæretur ab eo.* (Luc., xii, 48.)

2. *Religious respect for the Order which has been received and a great solicitude to fulfil its duties.* Since, says St. Paul, God has made me the apostle of the nations, I wish to honor my ministry by acquiting myself worthily of it: *Quamdiu ego sum gentium apostolus, ministerium meum honorificabo.* (Rom., xi, 13) Should not every minister of the Lord have similar sentiments? Greatly revere the dignity with which you are vested, respect it especially by the fidelity with which you fulfil its obligations and practice its virtues; that is an engagement that is made at the time of ordination, and a condition which must be fulfilled in order to merit promotion to a higher Order: *Vide ministerium quod accepisti a*

Domino, ut illud impleas, said the Apostle to a minister of the Church of Colossa (IV, 17), and elsewhere writing to his disciple, the bishop of Ephesus: *Qui bene ministraverint, gradum bonum sibi acquirent in Christo Jesu.* (I TIM., III, 13.) *Qui bene præsunt, duplici honore digni habeantur.* (I TIM., V. 17.)

3. *A saintly ardor to use the powers and the graces with which you have been honored, for the glory of God.* Is it not just to employ for God what we receive from God, and what has been entrusted to us in the interest of God? It is His grace that has made us what we are, ecclesiastics as well as Christians: *Ipsius enim sumus factura, creati in Christo Jesu in operibus bonis, ut in illis ambulemus.* (EPH., II, 10.) We should glorify God as ecclesiastics still more than as Christians: *Ipse fecit nos regnum et sacerdotes: ipsi gloria et imperium.* (APOC., I, 6.) To be ashamed of exercising the Orders with which we are vested, would be to show that we have not received their graces or that we have lost their spirit. A fervent ecclesiastic is happy to have to perform the functions of his Orders, especially the least important; and when the occasion of exercising them does not arise, he applies himself more diligently to

the practice of the virtues proper to them, to the edification of his neighbor, to study of the Word of God, to giving good advice, etc.

THIRD POINT. Often meditate upon your ordination in the presence of God that you may become grateful and fervent. Say with St. Paul: *Gratias ei qui me confortavit Christo Jesu Domino nostro, quia fidelem me existimavit, ponens in ministerio* (I TIM., I, 12); or with St. Augustine: *Quid tibi retribuere possum pro tantis beneficiis misericordiæ tuæ? Diligam te, Domine, virtus mea, et vivam jam non mihi sed tibi.* Let these sentiments remain in your heart, until the end of your life, with the remembrance of your ordination. This would be enough to assure your perseverance and your sanctification, to bring you to serve God with a fidelity and a fervor more and more perfect: *Ut sine timore servias illi in sanctitate et justitia coram ipso omnibus diebus tuis.* (LUC., I, 74.)

Have a special love for the Canticle of Zachary, and that of the Blessed Virgin. Always recite them in the spirit of the Church, to express your gratitude to God.

MEDITATION LXVIII.

ON THE DANGER OF NEGLECTING THE GRACES OF ORDINATION.

First Point. Adore the divine Master under the type of that husbandman of the Gospel, who neglects nothing in the cultivation of his land, but who expects from each of his trees fruits proportionate to his care. You know what words the sight of the barren fig-tree calls forth: *Ecce anni tres ex quo venio quærens fructum, et non invenio. Succide ergo illam: ut quid etiam terram occupat?* (Luc., xiii, 7.) If he postpones its destruction at the request of his servant, he warns him that it is for the last time: *Sin autem, in futurum succides eam.* Is not the Seminary like the garden of the Church in which the Lord cultivates His best plants, those whom He most esteems, and from whom he expects the best fruits: *quasi hortus irriguus* (Isai., lviii, 2), *sicut hortus voluptatis* (Ezec., xxxvi, 35), *sicut paradisus Domini.* (Gen., xii, 11)? Should not each year which you pass there, and each ordination in which you participate, make you grow in merits and in virtues? Yes; this is the fruit which Our Lord expects from the graces with which He overwhelms you. If you

derive no profit from them, if you always remain sterile, may you not fear that you shall finally weary His patience? Beseech Him to be merciful to you, and to give you time to satisfy His justice: *Domine, dimitte et hoc anno.* (Luc., xiii, 8.)

Second Point. Consider what an evil it would be to allow the graces of your first ordinations to be lost.

1. It would offend God, and deeply wound the three Divine Persons whose minister you are to be: the heavenly Father, Whose most precious treasures you would waste; the Word Incarnate, Whose blood you would render useless for yourself and for others, and the Holy Ghost, Whose virtue you would render ineffective and Whose designs you would thwart. In such conduct there would be not only negligence and cowardice, but also a kind of perfidy, as the Bishop tells the Acolytes; for would it not be to betray the confidence of the Church, and to abuse the gifts of God, in defiance of the most sacred obligations? It is then to ecclesiastics more than to the simple faithful, it is to you especially, after your ordination, that the admonition of the Apostles should be repeated: *Nolite contristare Spiritum*

sanctum. (EPH., IV, 30.) *Spiritum nolite extinguere.* (I THESS., V, 19.) *Noli negligere grátiam quæ in te est.* (I TIM., 14.) And it is you particularly who are bound to reflect upon the grave words, which this holy Apostle addressed to the faithful of Jerusalem, concerning the special graces which Heaven had bestowed upon them: *Terra sæpe venientem super se bibens imbrem et generans herbam opportunam accipit benedictionem a Deo, proferens autem spinas ac tribulos reproba est et maledicto proxima.* (HEB., VI, 7, 8.)

2. It would be to prepare yourself very badly for the priesthood and put yourself in danger of profaning it. All progress in Holy Orders demands and supposes a corresponding progress in perfection. *Merita debent præire bonorum operum,* says St. Ambrose, *ut dignus habearis ad ordinationem.* It is especially the priesthood which requires careful preparation and demands a high degree of virtue. A priest worthy of the name should, according to the same Doctor, join to the character of the Order that of sanctity: *Ut sit vere sacerdos, oportet ut non solum sacramento sed justitia induatur.* The least that can be asked is that he have worthily received the

preceding Orders, that he have preserved the grace conferred in them and that he be anxious to put it to profit. *Omni habenti dabitur*, says Our Lord. (MATTHEW, XXV, 29.) To him who has will be given, and he shall receive in proportion to what he has. But he who has not known how to guard and to value the gifts, which have been given to him, shall lose even his last farthing. *Tollite ab eo unam et date ei qui decem mnas habet. Omni enim habenti dabitur et abundabit. Ei autem qui non habet, et quod videtur habere auferetur ab eo.*

3. It would even compromise his vocation and endanger his whole future. Until one is in Sacred Orders, he can always change his career, and this change would become a duty if he lost the hope of sanctifying himself, and of having peace of soul in the ecclesiastical state. Now should not a cleric who thinks little of the graces of his Orders, who does not strive to profit by them, and after receiving them, continues to live almost as he lived when a layman, acknowledge that the obligations of the priesthood are greater than his courage? How hope that he may ever find his happiness in performing them well? *Quapropter, fratres, magis satagite ut per*

bona opera certam vestram vocationem et electionem faciatis. (II PET., I, 10.) *Sic te præpara, sic lege, sic stude, sic loquere et exhortare ut voceris a Deo tanquam Aaron, quem elegit ipsum.* (PET. Bles.)

THIRD POINT. Accustom yourself to consider, in the Orders which you have received not so much the honors which elevate you than the duties which subject you to a more perfect life: *Honores onera.* If each ordination confers new powers and new graces upon you, each one also imposes new obligations and increases your responsibility. *Cum enim augentur dona, rationes etiam crescunt donorum. Tanto ergo esse humilior atque ad serviendum Deo promptior quisque debet ex munere, quanto se obligatiorem esse conspicit in reddenda ratione.* (S. GREG. Magn.) Often imagine Our Savior coming to you, as the husbandman of the parable, to receive the fruits to which His care entitles Him. See what you have to offer Him and how He would judge your fidelity or your negligence: *Omni die me fertilem sibi Christus inveniat,* said St. Paulinus.

Father Demia, the pious founder of the Sisters of St. Charles at Lyons, had engraved, in memory of his first ordination, a medal of the Blessed Virgin,

carrying the Child Jesus in her arms, with this inscription: *Interveni pro clero.* He loved to distribute these medals to the faithful, especially to the children in the catechism classes and to the poor, recommending to their prayers the sanctification of all ecclesiastics and particularly of himself.

MEDITATION XLIX.

ON HOLY COMMUNION AS A PREPARATION FOR ORDERS.

First Point. Let us adore the Son of God, instituting the sacrament of the Eucharist, that is, veiling His humanity under the appearance of bread and wine, in order to be united to us, and to become our food. For it is especially by this means that He wishes to animate us with His spirit and develop in us the divine life, the germ of which we have received in baptism: *Ego sum panis vivus*, he says, *qui manducat me, et ipse vivet propter me.* (Joan., vi, 41, 58.) Blessed are the pure of heart, because they will see in themselves the God of all purity; they will possess Him in a most intimate and complete manner here below! Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, because they will be satisfied!

He is justice itself, who wills to give Himself to them! He is essential sanctity, who becomes their food and their life! Alas! Why are that purity of heart, that love of justice, those desires for true perfection so rare? Why do so many souls, especially called to a holy life, prefer the frivolities of the world, and the deceitful allurements of some vain pleasures, to the life of Our Savior, to the divine Food which would give this life to them!

Second Point. Consider the reasons why the Council of Trent recommends frequent communion to ecclesiastics who are preparing for Holy Orders.

1. The first reason is the necessity of making great progress in perfection in short time. Men with only ordinary virtue would lack an essential quality for becoming ministers of the Holy of Holies, and much more so, for becoming His priests: *Memores sint ejus quod scriptum est: Sancti estote, quoniam ego sanctus sum.* (Sess. xxiv.) What progress has a young man to make, who leaves the world and begins to practice the perfect life! And he must arrive at the goal in a brief time, and make all this progress without neglecting his studies, during the intervals between his different ordinations! Happy is he then

that he may rely upon the assistance of heaven, and that he has at his disposal a wholly divine source of grace in the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Savior. Because it is particularly for the weak that this Sacrament has been instituted, it is for them who have the desire to advance in perfection, but who lack the ardor, the energy and the constancy. *Dimittere eos jejunos nolo*, said the divine Master, *ne deficiant in via.* (MATTH., XV, 32.) In offering you this bread of life, *panem vitæ, panem vivum, panem de cælo,* at the holy table, He seems to say to you as His angel said to Elias: *Surge, comede: grandis enim tibi restat via.* (III REG., XIX, 7.) Be docile like the Prophet, and profit as he did, by the gift of God: *Elias comedit et bibit; et ambulavit in fortitudine cibi illius quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus usque ad montem Dei Horeb.* By acting otherwise, by neglecting the most powerful means which heaven offers you to sustain your strength would you not expose yourself to the danger of fainting on the way which leads to the summit of the holy mountain where God has His altar? *Mens deficit quam non recepta eucharistia erigit et accendit.* And Our Lord: *Nisi manducaveritis, non habebitis vitam in vobis.* (JOAN., VI, 54.)

2. The second reason is *the honor of the Son of God, residing in the Blessed Sacrament,* who demands of His ministers a devotion more and more fervent in proportion as they advance in Holy Orders.

This may be seen from the following considerations: (1) There is a principle that the powers conferred by ordination are all related to the Eucharist, and that this sacrament is the ultimate end and the cause of all Orders; so that all the ministers of the Church might be called, and really are, the ministers of the body and blood of Our Savior. Should we not conclude that their devotion for the Eucharist should correspond to the importance of their powers and their functions? And how could their devotion for the Eucharist increase in them, if they had not more and more attraction for communion and if they did not take ever-increasing care to become worthy of it? (2) There is no one to whom Our Lord gives Himself so often and so fully as to His priests, consequently there is no one of whom He demands more love, no one who should offer Him greater pledges of devotion and fidelity. But it is not only the Savior but also the faithful themselves who require from the ministers of the altar, evidences of their good

dispositions. What well-founded suspicions might they not have if they did not see in an aspirant to the priesthood true devotion for the Eucharist, if his communions did not become more and more frequent, if he showed in his reception of this sacrament that he was less assiduous and less fervent than many of the laity? Who does not know how much men who have but little religion are inclined to attribute to selfishness the most holy of our actions, even the oblation and the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice? And who has not heard applied to the ministers of the Church, the reproach made to the children of Aaron by the last of the prophets: *Quis ex vobis claudat ostia et incendat altare gratuito?* (Mal., i, 10.)

Third Point. Have you sufficiently understood before how necessary devotion to the Eucharist is to ecclesiastics who aspire to the priesthood? Do you endeavor to acquire it as much as you should? If your communions become more frequent are they also more holy and more fruitful? Is your faith in the real presence sufficiently firm and practical? Should you not, in order to increase your fervor, meditate more frequently upon the Blessed Sacrament,

visit it with more regularity, and assist with more recollection at the Holy Sacrifice? Could you not augment and perfect in your soul, the dispositions which frequent communion demands, purity of heart, zeal for perfection, and love of Our Lord? Search in concluding, for the particular point which should inspire your resolutions.

Reflect upon those words of St. Francis de Sales, the truth of which should be recognized in you, no less than in the simple faithful: "For twenty years that I am in the holy ministry I have been privileged to touch with my fingers the all powerful virtue of communion to sanctify souls and to deify them in a way. To obtain this effect it is enough to frequent it assiduously with the proper faith, purity of soul and devotion."

MEDITATION L.

THE RESPECT WHICH THOSE IN MINOR ORDERS SHOULD HAVE FOR HIGHER ORDERS.

First Point. Our Lord in desiring that the clergy consist of different Orders, forming a hierarchy, has proposed, among other motives, to place before the eyes of the faithful, in the mutual rela-

tions of His ministers, an example of the subordination essential to every society and a model of the respect due to every superiority, either of honor or of jurisdiction: *Cui timorem, timorem; cui honorem, honorem.* (Rom., xiii, 7.) *Non tantum bonis et modestis, sed etiam dyscolis.* (I Pet., ii, 18.) Admire the wisdom of your divine Master, who is always careful to instruct by examples, rather than by words. Desire that His designs be accomplished in the Church and in the clergy, and ask Him for the grace to conform to His views.

Second Point. Consider why the Council of Trent emphasizes the respect for higher Orders, *major erga presbyteros et superiores ordines reverentia*, as a sign of progress in virtue and of a vocation to a higher Order.

1. Respect for the hierarchy indicates several very important and meritorious dispositions, such as modesty, docility, and charity. It gives reason to hope that you will know how to govern the inclination to pride and egotism. But what is more important in an ecclesiastic than those virtues, the source of so much edification? And what is more to be feared than these inclinations, the source of so many difficul-

ties, divisions and scandals in the holy ministry? In showing concern about this matter, in demanding the guarantees that her interest requires, the Church profits by her experience, and manifests her wisdom.

2. This respect, when sincere, shows that Holy Orders are considered from the true point of view which is that of faith, and that they are honored for themselves or rather on account of God Who is their author, without merely considering the persons who are invested with them. We are justified in believing from this that aspirants have always considered them in this light, that they have entered upon the ecclesiastical career not through human motives, but only from the desire of becoming more attached to God, finally that they will honor the character of the priesthood and know how to make it honored in themselves, without ceasing to be penetrated with a feeling of their nothingness and misery, as creatures and as sinners.

3. This respect is especially a guarantee of the religious submission which ecclesiastics must constantly render to ecclesiastical authority. As this sentiment is absolutely indispensable for the good government of the Church, and as nothing can take its place in a society in which all obedience is voluntary and in which the Superiors have no recourse

to external means of restraint, it is natural that the Church exhibits a particular solicitude for it, that she requires proofs of its existence, and that she demands a certain practice of it. Thus does she wish that her ordinandi be prepared to keep the promise of obedience and reverence, *obedientiæ et reverentiæ*, which they are to make to their bishop, in a public and solemn manner, at the foot of the altar, the day of their promotion to the priesthood.

THIRD POINT. An ecclesiastic should become accustomed to consider in his superiors and his confrères, less their personal qualifications, which might not please him, than the position which they occupy, and the dignities with which they are vested. Make a rule of this practice and, according to the counsel of the Apostle, give to each the respect and obedience to which he is entitled by his rank. Do not act in this manner through human motives, to gain favor or to obtain something in return, but through the spirit of faith and of religion, to honor Our Lord in His representatives: *Sicut Domino, et non hominibus.* (COL., III, 23.) By doing this you will be filled with the spirit of your Order, you will avoid many faults of thought, word, and deed, and you

will render meritorious a multitude of attentions, of marks of deference, and of constraints more or less onerous, to which you must be subjected, but which are often not very supernatural in their motives and in their object.

Be exact in the observation of the rubrics during the offices. The ecclesiastical ceremonial is for the ministers of the Church an admirable ordinance of respect, of deference, and of mutual regard. By exercising them in their official function they become disposed also to observe them in the relations of ordinary life.

PART III.

THE RITE OF ORDINATION.

THE ORDINATION OF OSTIARIES.

After the first lesson the Archdeacon calls those who are to be promoted to Minor Orders. After they have knelt down before the Bishop, he, being seated and with his mitre on, admonishes them, saying:

Suscepturi filii carissimi, officium Ostiariorum, videte quæ in domo Dei agere debeatis. Ostiarium oportet percutere cymbalum et campanam; aperire ecclesiam et sacrarium, et librum aperire ei qui prædicat. Providete igitur ne per negligentiam vestram, illarum rerum quæ intra ecclesiam sunt aliquid depereat, certisque horis domum Dei aperiatis fidelibus et semper claudatis infidelibus. Studete etiam ut, sicut materialibus clavibus ecclesiam visibilem aperitis et clauditis, sic et invisibilem Dei domum, corda scilicet fidelium dictis et exemplis vestris claudatis diabolo et aperiatis Deo; ut divina verba quæ audierint corde retineant et opere compleant. Quod in vobis Dominus perficiat per misericordiam suam.

Then the Bishop takes the keys of the church and while presenting them to be touched by each in turn, says:

Sic agite quasi reddituri Deo rationem pro iis rebus quæ his clavibus recluduntur.

After this the Archdeacon makes them shut and open a door of the church, then ring a small bell. After this the Bishop says to those who are present:

Deum Patrem omnipotentem suppliciter deprecemur, ut hos famulos suos bene ✠ dicere dignetur, quos in officium Ostiariorum eligere dignatus est; ut sit eis fidelissima cura in domo Dei diebus et noctibus ad distinctionem certarum horarum ad invocandum nomen Domini, adjuvante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui tecum vivit, etc.

Then the Bishop still standing, having put off his mitre, and turned towards the altar, says: *Oremus*, and the ministers add: *Flectamus genua.* The Bishop standing with his mitre off and turned towards those who have been ordained, says:

Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens æterne Deus, bene ✠ dicere dignare hos famulos tuos in officium Ostiariorum, ut inter janitores Ecclesiæ tuo pareant obsequio, et inter electos tuos partem tuæ mereantur habere mercedis. Per Dominum nostrum.

THE ORDINATION OF LECTORS.

The Bishop sits with his mitre on. Those who are to be ordained kneel before him while he admonishes them saying:

Electi, filii carissimi, ut sitis Lectores in domo Dei nostri, officium vestrum cognoscite et implete. Potens est enim Deus ut augeat vobis gratiam perfectionis æternæ. Lectorem siquidem oportet legere ci qui prædicat, et lectiones cantare et benedicere panes et omnes fructos novos. Studete igitur verba Dei, videlicet lectiones sacras distincte et aperte ad intelligentiam et ædificationem fidelium absque omni mendacio falsitatis proferre, ne veritas divinarum lectionum, incuria vestra, ad instructionem audientium corrumpatur. Quod autem ore legitis, corde credatis atque opere compleatis, quatenus auditores vestros verbo pariter et exemplo vestro docere possitis. Ideoque dum legitis, in alto loco Ecclesiæ statis, ut ab omnibus audiamini et videamini, figurantes positione corporali vos in alto virtutum gradu debere conversari, quatenus cunctis a quibus audimini et videmini cœlestis vitæ formam præbeatis: quod in vobis Deus impleat per gratiam suam.

Then the Bishop presents to them the book from which they are to read, and, while they touch it with their right hand, he says:

Accipite, et estote verbi Dei relatores; habituri, si fideliter et utiliter impleveritis officium vestrum, partem cum iis qui verbum Dei administraverunt ab initio.

After this, the Bishop, standing with his mitre on, and turned towards those who are still kneeling, says:

Oremus, fratres carissimi, Deum Patrem omnipotentem, ut super hos famulos suos quos in Ordinem Lectorum dignatur assumere, bene ✠ dictionem suam clementer effundat, quatenus distincte legant quæ in Ecclesia Dei legenda sunt et eadem operibus impleant. Per Dominum, etc.

Then, putting off his mitre, he says: *Oremus*, and, turning towards the Lectors, he recites the following prayer:

Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, bene ✠ dicere dignare hos famulos tuos in officium Lectorum, ut assiduitate lectionum instructi atque ordinati, et agenda dicant et dicta opere compleant, ut in utroque sanctæ Ecclesiæ exemplo sanctitatis suæ consulant. Per Dominum.

THE ORDINATION OF EXORCISTS.

When those who are to be ordained have knelt down the Bishop admonishes them saying:

Ordinandi, filii carissimi, in officium Exorcistarum debetis noscere quid suscipitis. Exorcistam enim oportet abjicere dæmones et dicere populo ut qui non communicat det locum, et aquam in ministerio fundere. Accipitis itaque potestatem imponendi manum super energumenos, et per impositionem manuum vestrarum, gratia Spiritus Sancti et verbis exorcismi, pelluntur spiritus immundi a corporibus obsessis. Studete igitur, ut sicut a corporibus aliorum dæmones accipitis, ita a mentibus et corporibus vestris omnem immunditiam et nequitiam ejiciatis, ne illis succumbatis quos ab aliis vestro ministerio effugatis. Discite per officium vestrum vitiis imperare, ne in moribus vestris aliquid sui juris inimicus valeat vindicare. Tunc etenim recte in aliis dæmonibus imperabitis, cum prius in vobis eorum multimodam nequitiam superabitis. Quod vobis Dominus agere concedat per Spiritum sanctum suum.

After this instruction, the Bishop makes them touch the book of exorcisms, while he says:

Accipite et commendate memoriæ et habete potestatem imponendi manus super energumenos, sive baptizatos, sive catechumenos.

Afterwards the Exorcists kneeling, the Bishop standing with his mitre on says:

Deum Patrem omnipotentem, Fratres carissimi, supplices deprecemur, ut hos famulos suos benedicere dignetur in officium Exorcistarum, ut sint spirituales imperatores ad abjiciendos dæmones de corporibus obsessis, cum omni nequitia eorum multiformi; per unigenitum Filium suum, etc.

Then, putting off the mitre, he says: *Oremus;* and, after the *Flectamus genua,* turning towards the Exorcists, he makes the following prayer:

Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, benedicere dignare hos famulos tuos in officium Exorcistarum, ut per impositionem manuum et oris officium, potestatem et imperium habeant spiritus immundos coercendi, ut probabiles sint medici Ecclesiæ tuæ, gratia curationum virtuteque cœlesti confirmati. Per Dominum nostrum.

THE ORDINATION OF ACOLYTES.

While those who are to be ordained kneel, the Bishop addresses the following instruction to them:

Suscepturi, filii carissimi, officium Acolythorum, pensate quod suscipitis. Acolytham etenim oportet ceroferarium ferre, luminaria ecclesiæ accendere, vinum et aquam ad Eucharistiam ministrare. Studete igitur susceptum officium digne implere. Non enim Deo placere poteritis, si lucem Deo manibus præferentes, operibus tenebrarum inserviatis et per hoc aliis exempla perfidiæ præbeatis. Sed sicut veritas dicit: *Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est.* Et sicut Apostolus Paulus ait: *In medio nationis pravæ et perversæ, lucete sicut luminaria in mundo, verbum, vitæ continentes. Sint ergo lumbi vestri præcincti et lucernæ ardentes in manibus vestris, ut filii lucis sitis. Eratis enim aliquando tenebræ, nunc autem lux in Domino. Ut filii lucis ambulate.* Quæ sit vero ista lux, quam tantopere inculcat Apostolus, ipse demonstrat subdens: *Fructus enim lucis est in omni bonitate et justitia et veritate.* Estote igitur solliciti in omni justitia, bonitate et veritate, ut et vos et alios et Dei Ecclesiam illuminetis. Tunc

etenim in Dei sacrificio digne vinum suggeretis et aquam, si vos ipsi Deo sacrificium per castam vitam et bona opera oblati fueritis. Quod vobis Dominus concedat per misericordiam suam.

Then the Bishop presents to the ordinands a candlestick with an unlighted candle, each in turn touching it with the right hand, while the Bishop says:

Accipite ceroferarium cum cereo, ut sciatis vos ad accendenda Ecclesiæ luminaria mancipari, in nomine Domini. Amen.

Then he presents an empty cruet to them, which they touch with the right hand, while he says to them:

Accipite urceolum, ad suggerendum vinum et aquam in Eucharistiam sanguinis Christi, in nomine Domini. Amen.

Afterwards they remain kneeling, and the Bishop standing, with his mitre on, turns towards them and says:

Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, fratres carissimi suppliciter deprecemur, ut hos famulos suos benedicere dignetur in Ordine Acolythorum, quatenus lumen visibile manibus præferentes, lumen quoque spirituale moribus præbeant, adjuvante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui cum eo, etc.

Then he puts off the mitre and says: *Oremus*, after *Flectamus genua*, he turns towards them and recites the following prayer:

Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens æterne Deus, qui per Jesum Christum Filium tuum Dominum nostrum et Apostolos ejus in hunc mundum lumen claritatis tuæ misisti, quique, ut mortis nostræ antiquum aboleres chirographum, gloriossimæ illum crucis vexillo affigi, ac sanguinem et aquam ex latere illius pro salute generis humani effluere voluisti: benedicere dignare hos famulos tuos in officium Acolythorum, ut ad accendendum lumen ecclesiæ tuæ et ad suggerendum vinum et aquam, ad conficiendum sanguinem Christi Filii tui in offerenda Eucharistia, sanctis altaribus tuis fideliter subministrent. Accende, Domine, mentes eorum et corda ad amorem gratiæ tuæ, ut illuminati vultu splendoris tui, fideliter tibi in sancta Ecclesia deserviant. Per eumdem.

OREMUS.

Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens æterne Deus, qui ad Moysen et Aaron locutus es ut accenderentur lucernæ in tabernaculo testimonii, bene ✠ dicere dignare hos famulos tuos, ut sint Acolythi in Ecclesia tua. Per Christum.

OREMUS.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, fons lucis et origo bonitatis, qui per Jesum Christum Filium tuum, lumen verum, mundum illuminasti, ejusque Passionis mysterio redemisti, bene ✠ dicere dignare hos famulos tuos, quos in officium Acolythorum consecramus, poscentes clementiam tuam, ut eorum mentes et lumine scientiæ illustres et pietatis tuæ rore irriges, ut ita acceptum ministerium, te auxiliante, peragant, qualiter ad æternam remunerationem pervenire mereantur. Per eumdem Dominum, etc.

THE END.

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